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**THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE
IN GERMAN LITERATURE**

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THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE IN GERMAN LITERATURE

BY

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CALVIN THOMAS.

NEW YORK, May, 1918

PREFACE

The subject of this monograph was suggested to me some two years ago by Professor Calvin Thomas while I was a graduate student at Columbia University. Originally the study was to be entitled *Literary Satire at the Expense of the Holy Roman Empire*, but in the course of the work it was found advisable to adopt the present broader, more euphonious title. This change, important as it may seem at first blush, is after all of minor significance, for the very nature of the subject tends to encourage an unfavorable, satirical attitude. Not only does this attitude gradually become predominant as time goes on, but it is also the most interesting angle from which the Holy Roman Empire could be considered.

In the field of literary criticism two distinct types of subject-matter may be distinguished, viz., the intensive and the extensive, the former dealing in minute detail with some single phase of a given writer or group of writers, the latter treating synoptically a given phenomenon extending over a longer period of time. That works of the latter class, to which the present monograph belongs, cannot within reasonable scope achieve any great degree of completeness in the presentation of pertinent matter is quite apparent. I have therefore endeavored to offer only such material as seemed of intrinsic value.

It is a privilege to acknowledge my great obligations to Professor Thomas for suggesting the subject, and for the aid and inspiration which he gave me not only while I was engaged in the present work, but during the entire five years that I have known him. I am also indebted to Professors W. A. Hervey, Arthur F. J. Remy and F. W. J. Heuser for valuable suggestions and to Professor John Bassett Moore for giving me access to some rare and valuable old books of his private library, which were useful to me in the course of my work.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTORY: SOME HISTORICAL DATA	I
II.	THE PERIOD PRIOR TO 1500	20
III.	THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY	34
IV.	THE CENTURY OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR	60
V.	THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BEFORE THE CLASSICAL PERIOD	77
VI.	GOETHE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES	88
	APPENDIX A. ENGLISH RENDERINGS OF THE LATIN AND OLD GERMAN CITATIONS	121
	APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY	132

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: SOME HISTORICAL DATA

Whether the Holy Roman Empire, which was called into existence by the memorable imperial coronation of the Carolingian ruler Charles, afterwards known as the Great, an act performed by Pope Leo III. at Rome on Christmas day of the year 800, was a blessing to the world in general and to Germany in particular, may hardly be called a moot question. For altho both sides of the controversy have been well presented by many historians, scholars are in the final analysis rather inclined to ascribe more evil than good to the venerable structure. And whereas fully one hundred years have now passed since the Austrian emperor, Francis II., actuated rather by political stress than by lack of veneration, dissolved the tottering Empire that had long since outlived its usefulness, we may safely infer that history has by this time pronounced its final decision in the matter.

In its best days, i. e., under Charles the Great and again under Otto the Great, then under Henry III. (1039–1056), when it reached the height of its power, and a century later under Frederick I. of Hohenstaufen (Friedrich Barbarossa, 1152–1189) the Holy Roman Empire was far more than a mere state. It was a great and powerful institution built around a wonderful system of ideas, as Bryce says (p. 2): the “most signal instance of the fusion of Roman and Teutonic elements in modern civilization,” and as Lamprecht puts it:¹ *eine der genialsten politischen Bauten, die die Geschichte Europas überhaupt gesehen hat.* Our purpose in the present introductory chapter is to study it as such, after having given some attention to the conditions out of which it grew, and to ex-

¹ In *Beilage* to Vol. XLII. (Jan.–Mar., 1915) of *Oesterreichische Rundschau*.

amine its gradual decline, until in the eighteenth century it became the laughing stock of all, for example, of the Frenchman Voltaire,² and "a favorite theme for satire."³ Preceded by an historical survey of this kind an investigation of the attitude of poets and men of letters toward the Empire in successive generations will perhaps be more intelligible.

We shall have to go considerably farther back than the year 800 A.D. in order to gather in the many threads of the woof that became in time the Romano-Germanic Empire. For altho a direct connection cannot be established between the later empire and the earlier Roman state founded by Augustus, many points of contact exist.⁴ The rulers of the old Roman Empire, for example, strove for, and attained, gradually increasing power, until Septimius Severus (193–211) became the sole source and center of political authority. His successor, Caracalla, gradually broadened the compass of Roman citizenship by granting it to all natives of the Roman world, while Diocletian (284–305) endeavored to invest the person of the sovereign with more sanctity and to cast about him an added lustre. Constantine (306–337) in his turn recognized Christianity as a lawful religion (313) and ultimately became a proselyte himself, in this way laying a firm foundation for the union of Church and state. The alliance thus begun is one of far-reaching importance for all subsequent history; it marks the rise of spiritual power and revives the conception of an all-embracing, universal Roman people.

The old Empire gradually wasted away, but its heritage survived and flourished on other soil. Not to the East was it taken, the home of a growing Oriental despotism, but to the North, the land of unspoiled, malleable barbarians. And necessity was the author of the transplantation. When in 741 Pope Gregory III. felt hard pressed by the Eastern Emperor on one side and the Lombards on the other, he turned to

² His witticism to the effect that it was neither *Holy*, nor *Roman*, nor Empire is well known.

³ Calvin Thomas, *Faust*, Vol. I., p. 302 (Boston, 1897).

⁴ The main authorities used in the following account are Bryce, Giesebricht, and Lamprecht: *Deutsche Geschichte*.

Charles Martel for aid. Circumstances prevented a response at the time, but the precedent, which in truth had been established as early as under Gregory II., was well remembered in the Frankish mayoral family. All expectations of the latter were met; the impotent Merovingian, Childeric, was sent packing and Pippin appeared in his place, possessed of far greater power and much prestige. Pope Leo III. followed in the footsteps of his predecessors in his devotion to the Frankish rulers, and when he crowned Charles at St. Peter's with the diadem of the Cæsars, he rekindled in the minds of men the smouldering conception of a great Roman Empire as a necessary part of a well ordered world. Cordial relations between the Eastern Emperors and the Popes had long before ceased to exist; the great Frank proved to be an able successor, indeed, of the former rulers and soon enjoyed full temporal authority, which found its complement in the spiritual power of the Holy Father.

Eginhard, the biographer of Charles, alleges that the king was very loath to accept the Roman crown from Leo,⁵ suspecting no doubt the legality of the offer, and foreseeing possible complications with the Eastern line of Emperors. That no difficulties arose was due in some degree at least to the apathy of the Eastern court, for the latter readily agreed to negotiations whereby Charles was recognized as Emperor and ruler of northern Italy, with the exception of Venice. Later, in 1453, the Turks captured Constantinople and were long considered the most formidable foe of the Empire. Still their rulers were officially recognized by the Western Emperors.⁶

⁵ *Vita Caroli*, Chap. 38.

⁶ In this connection it is of interest to examine the titles exchanged in official correspondence of the Roman Emperor and the Turkish Sultan. According to Dumont and Rousset's *Le Ceremoniel Diplomatique* in the *Supplement au Corps Universel Diplomatique*, Vol. V., p. 726, the Sultan usually writes *Chief of Christianity or Most glorious among the Christian princes*, while the Emperor writes *Emperor of the Ottomans and sovereign in Asia, in Greece, and in the Orient*. In 1606 it was mutually agreed by the Treaty of Torock (art. II.) between Rudolf II. and Achmet I. that in the future they would not use the title of *King* in addressing one another, but would substitute *Emperor*. In the Treaty of Carlowitz (1699)

Altho Charles was nominally Roman Emperor, his government was decidedly Germanic in character. It bore the impress of his own great personality, his vigor, his genius. Still the difficulties which were destined to confront his remote successors made themselves felt even in his day: the hindering, obstructing, ecclesiastical power of the Pope, which at best was incompatible with imperial projects of any kind, and the diversity and discordance of the various members of the vast Empire. For thruout the entire so-called Middle Ages two diametrically opposite theories struggled with alternate success for supremacy, viz., that of disorder and anarchic confusion and that of a harmonious and universal system of government, combining spiritual and temporal power. It was this battle against the forces of evil from which the successful, powerful Emperors, such as Charles the Great and Frederick I. emerged victorious, but in which the less gifted great majority foundered, as it were. In short, the Holy Roman Empire contained in its very nature the symptoms of the festering wound to which it later succumbed.

In more than one sense of the word the direct results of Charlemagne's work were shortlived and Otto the Great became the second founder of the Empire. Bryce goes so far as to call the Holy Roman Empire, in the later significance of the term, i. e., the sovereignty of Germany and Italy vested in a Germanic prince, a creation of Otto (p. 80). But altho Otto's coronation was greeted by contemporaries as a boon for Germany, most modern historians argue that he sacrificed his country to his inordinate ambition, that he neglected his own kingdom for a dream of world dominion. His case, however, was destined to be far from unique in the annals of the Empire. History furnishes all too many examples of unscrupulous Popes who lured vainglorious Germanic kings into their entangling meshes. As errors oft repeated are soon moulded

the Turkish plenipotentiaries addressed the Emperor *Caesarea et Romanorum Imperatoria Majestas*, while the imperial delegates referred to the Sultan as *Imperialis Ottomanica Majestas*. In the Treaty of Passarowitz we read: *Majestas Augustissimi et Potentissimi Romanorum Imperatoris* and *Majestas Serenissimi et Potentissimi Ottomanorum Imperatoris*.

into habits, the unnatural alliance between Pope and Emperor in time came to be considered both natural and necessary. Thruout the Middle Ages, then, we have the curious idea expressed that the Empire has its foundations in the very essence of things, a delusion which the era of the Renascence alone was able to dispel. This mental attitude of the times, suffused as it was with conceptions of World Monarchy and World Religion, saw in the new religion of Christianity a holy, all-including empire of the spirit, eternal in its structure, and inextricably interwoven with this, a universal temporal dominion, also eternal. It followed axiomatically that the union of the two elements should be eternal, too.⁷

The doctrine of the indivisibility of the Empire in its spiritual and temporal aspects, of the complete harmony of ecclesiastical and imperial powers, soon revealed its impracticability, for it is doubtful if at any time after the death of Henry III. (1056) an instance of such unity can be found. In the sequel the Popes became haughtier and either demanded unconditional obedience on the part of the civil government or sought to arrogate to themselves the entire power. The Emperors, on the other hand, occupied a singular position. At first blush it would seem that their authority and jurisdiction were unlimited, but such was hardly ever the case. True, they surpassed all others in dignity, but their suzerainty was peculiarly indefinite and different in its nature from that of other sovereigns. Acting as a link that nominally joined the other rulers in a bond of unity, the imperial crown stood aloof with its unlimited prerogatives, which, however, usually carried with them not a vestige of real authority. Later, when nations began to develop, the Emperors could have boasted even of

⁷ The doctrine of the eternity of the Empire appears in many imperial documents. For instance, an agreement made by Emperor Maximilian between Rüdiger, abbot of Weissenburg, and the Burgomaster and council of that city on October 2, 1518, reads: *Und damit angezeigter Vertrag in allen seinen Punkten und Artikeln dem gemeinen Mann desto bass in Würden und Gedächtnüss bleiben und gehalten werden / so ordnen und setzen Wir / dass hinführō in Ewigkeit solcher unser Vertrag alle Jahr . . . verlesen / und in den gemelten Eyd ausgedruckt gesetzt werden solle.* Dumont, *Corps univ. dipl.*, IV., 1, p. 265. Cf. *infra* Appendix A.

international power, or rather prestige. But a vain boast it would have been, the boast of a visionary. The rise of nations, in truth, was one of the first premonitions of the inner collapse of the Empire.

Referring to the fact that the early Roman Emperors usually possessed the title of German king even before the imperial coronation, Bryce says (p. 121) : "The union in one person of two characters, a union at first personal, then official, and which became at last a fusion of the two characters into something different from what either had been, is the key to the whole subsequent history of Germany and the Empire." The Emperor-King was indeed a peculiar monstrosity, who represented in his two titles a host of conflicting and contradictory theories. One thing, however, is certain. He was always more of a German Emperor than a *Romanorum Imperator* or *Römischer Kaiser*, altho the prestige of this shadowy title usually stood him in good stead. Neither in Rome nor in Italy at large did the Emperors ever gain a firm footing. The gradually increasing power of the Popes was, of course, a serious obstacle, especially to the less tractable sovereigns, who were constantly made to feel the dependence of their position and the usufructuary nature of their power. Frequent interregna, finally, not to mention such spectacles as the humiliation of Henry IV. at Canossa (1077), made matters worse for them. It is clear, then, that the more powerful the Popes waxed, the greater was the disadvantage of the Emperors. By well meant reforms with which the latter often assisted the papal cause they unconsciously wrought their own ruin.

Of course it would be wrong to assume that the Pope invariably worsted his colleague in every rencontre. Henry III., for instance, ruled with an iron hand, and Henry V. half a century later tried diligently to emulate him in this respect. But fifty years had thrown much weight into the papal balance and the later Henry could boast of but a scanty victory over Paschal II. in the Concordat of Worms (1122), while the Pope himself observed with glee how the ground was slowly slipping from beneath his adversary. As was to be expected, the

people of Germany usually stood by their Emperor in the many struggles against ecclesiasticism and slowly learned to hate the Italian miasma. But at the same time they began to envisage a new principle, to wit, that the essential, authoritative element in the Empire was after all the great body of princes and barons and not the Emperor himself. The thirteenth century had hardly been ushered in; already the most sacred, the most cherished principles and doctrines on which the supposedly eternal Empire had been constructed were falling hopelessly by the wayside.

The increasing power and influence of the nominally dependent princes, which gradually flowered forth into the important prerogative of electing the highest temporal lord in Christendom, soon made themselves felt very markedly. As early as 1156 the *Principes Electores* are mentioned,⁸ apparently as a recognized, authoritative body. The *Sachsenspiegel* (1230), however, is clearer on the subject, naming six constituent members and rejecting a seventh, the King of Bohemia, as un-German. Other early sources also touch upon the complicated and confused subject and contain variant versions which will be considered presently. In theory, no doubt, all the freemen of the Empire originally comprised the electoral body. Their rights, in turn, were delegated to certain princes and rulers, who by a peculiar, gradual accretion of prestige attained absolute and independent power and slowly widened their nominatival privileges into electoral rights. The germ of the later electoral college lies in the so-called process of praetaxation, or deliberation of the nominating body for the purpose of choosing one candidate from among many, a method which was followed as early as 1024 at the election of Conrad II. Hereupon followed the declaration on the part of the princes of their choice for king, the formal *Electio* or *Kur*, which was succeeded finally by the approval of the petty nobility. As to the exact manner of procedure in regard to details, method of voting, etc., much freedom was at first left to the contracting parties. The document which became fundamental

⁸ Pertz, *M. G. H. legg.*, II.

imperial law, the Golden Bull of Charles IV. (1356), settled many moot questions in this respect and became an instrument of far-reaching importance for later generations. But when subsequently the Electors became absolutely supreme, even the Golden Bull remained nothing more than a fatuous, operose edict.

The early German rulers took care not to assume the title of Emperor before the formal coronation by the Pope. So the Saxon Emperors previous to the anointment were simply *reges Francorum Orientalium* or *Francorum atque Saxonum reges*, while after the coronation they were legally entitled to the designation *Imperator Augustus*. To this was added later (probably by Otto III., possibly even earlier) the more specific *Romanorum*. The less obvious term *Rex Romanorum* was assumed first by Henry II. for reasons similar to those which had prompted former rulers to avoid the appellation of Emperor before the official sanction of the Pope. The second Henry, however, eager to show in some way the intimate relation between his native German crown and the honor of universal imperial sovereignty, emanating from Rome and the Church, brought the new title into use, which from the days of Henry IV. became quite customary. By virtue of a bull of Pope Julius II., Maximilian I., denied a passage to Rome by Venice in 1508, was granted the title *Imperator Electus* (*erwählter Kaiser*), which from Ferdinand I. on became the official imperial title directly after the royal coronation in Germany, altho after Frederick III. (1440-1493) not a single Emperor was again crowned in Rome by a Pope, and with the exception of Charles V., not a single one was crowned at all by a Pope in Italy. Nor was the very useful and sane practise, which made the imperial crown elective by its very nature, observed with any degree of fidelity. Beginning with Albert II. (1438) the honor remained, with only two unimportant exceptions (Charles VII. and Francis I.), in one family, the famous House of Hapsburg, founded even earlier than the time of Albert II., by Rudolf I. (1273). The result was that the heir-apparent was frequently and without compunction in-

vested with the title of *Romanorum Rex*, while his predecessor, the testator, still enjoyed the best of health. This clearly bewrays the gradual degeneration of the Empire, a degeneration which once begun on a large scale, slowly but surely ruined the once splendid structure!

In more than one instance an Emperor possessed as many as four distinct crowns, without regard to his minor titles, which when cited often exceed the limits of a folio column in Dumont's *Corps Diplomatique*. He was first King of Germany, i. e., in later times King of the Romans, and received this honor at Aachen, until after the time of Ferdinand I., when the election and coronation were usually held at Frankfurt, rarely at Regensburg. After Otto the Great every Emperor was invested with the insignia of this office. In the second place the Emperor received the imperial crown, a token of temporal world dominion, the historical development of which was described in the previous paragraph. The third title, that of King of Italy or of the Lombards, given at Monza, Milan or Pavia, was borne by almost every ruler who took the Roman imperial crown, down to Frederick III., when the practise was discontinued, except in the case of Charles V. Finally, four emperors received the Burgundian crown at Arles. From the time of Ferdinand I. the so-called *Wahlkapitulation* was prescribed for the Emperors, according to which they pledged themselves to make a diligent attempt to obtain the imperial insignia with all possible promptitude. But since not a single one of the subsequent rulers, Ferdinand I. included, was actually crowned at Rome, this pledge, like much else in the history of the later Empire, was meaningless. Later, in 1658, at the coronation of Leopold I., as well as in the case of all his successors, the phrase was at last modified. Mere superficial changes in legal documents, however, could no longer save the Empire from the fate of obsolescence. Absurdities developed in endless array, and what had once been fact soon degenerated into mere vacuous form. German rulers termed themselves Roman Emperors simply because their predecessors had possessed certain prerogatives, burying themselves with obstinate blindness in the glory that had been.

James Bryce, confirmed by other historians, believes that logically the Empire should have died with the Hohenstaufens at the time of the Great Interregnum. It had fulfilled its mission on earth, as far as that could be possible. Charles the Great, blessed with unrivalled power and resources, Otto the Great, a typically Germanic prince possessed of a smaller but firmer, more compact realm, and his successors for a period of over three hundred years, were on the whole all of them earnest, diligent rulers, strongly conscious of the importance of their trust. They had tried gallantly to maintain a position which in the final analysis was untenable. For a while they succeeded, altho ultimate failure was inevitable. Failure, however, is not always to be condemned, provided that it impresses its useful lesson upon succeeding generations. Such was unfortunately not the case in Germany, for the torpid, retrogressive Empire continued to exist for nearly five and a half centuries, decaying gradually at the core, until it became a mass of putridity, one of the most colossal jokes and striking paradoxes in all history.

The reasons for this obstinate adherence to old forms are easily intelligible. They are to be found in the seductive ambitions, the megalomania of a people who had been led to consider their national monarch a universal temporal sovereign whose well founded pretensions honored and exalted his own nation above all others. Hence ruler after ruler succumbed to the temptation, at times benefiting himself, but occasionally, too, heaping privations on his own head, yet surely working ruin for the future of his country. And what was a custom immemorial became a religious belief, as it were, a conviction that the German kingdom and *das Heilige Römische Reich deutscher Nation* were one. The latter name, more sonorous and beautiful than gravid in meaning, came to stand for a great sacred ideal, the most priceless possession of the nation. It was, indeed, a name to conjure with!

A circumstance which contributed largely to the attrition of the Emperor's power during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the condition of fealty which many of his

subjects enjoyed. Nobles and petty tyrants in countless numbers, not to mention the mightier rulers, boasted of the fact that they held their fiefs only from God and the Emperor, meaning thereby practically that they recognized no master at all. For the Emperor could but rarely, and then only when conditions made it imperative, give his attention to these unscrupulous robber barons. He was either busied elsewhere or lacked the requisite resources to impress his power upon them. The Electors, too, were as a rule but little solicitous of the imperial welfare, in fact, they were usually self-centered enough to elect a candidate who could with ease be swayed and influenced in their own interests. The cities, natural allies of the Emperor, could not be depended on by him for support, since feudalism still held the field. Financially the Empire was abjectly poor, for the sources of imperial income had been squandered. The result was that other sources of revenue, often unworthy and disgraceful, were sought. Patritius, the secretary of Frederick III., is quoted by Bryce⁹ as having said that the imperial income was hardly sufficient to defray the expenses of official embassies; Maximilian himself complained about the financial situation, and Sigismund once exclaimed to the Diet that the Empire was the most despoiled and poverty-stricken organization imaginable, so that he who ventured to accept its hegemony without possessing a private fortune was devoting himself to slavery and not to empire.¹⁰ Other pertinent statements, equally significant, are quoted. And if the leaders, the rulers themselves, were compelled to express themselves in such terms, it was little wonder that their subjects, who felt the stress in a different and more drastic way, should often have used even stronger and more pointed language.

To return to the difficult problem of the Electors. We have noticed that the *Sachsenspiegel* rejected the King of Bohemia from the electoral college, thus leaving six members, the three Rhenish archbishops, the Palsgrave of the Rhine, the Duke of the Saxons and the Margrave of Brandenburg. A letter of

⁹ From Moser's *Römische Kayser*.

¹⁰ Quoted by Bryce, p. 233.

Pope Urban in 1264 clearly specifies seven members, adding to the above the Bavarian Duke, and allotting the four great imperial household offices to the four temporal Electors, headed by the Duke of Saxony as Arch Marshal. Presently a quarrel arose because of a preponderating influence in the college of the House of Wittelsbach, which controlled both the County Palatine and the Bavarian duchy. Bohemia and Bavaria, too, were at swords' points on the question of relative rights to a seat in the college. Various tentative arrangements were made, all of them, however, with the object of restricting membership permanently to seven; the final decision, too, rendered by the Golden Bull (1356), which granted the seat to Bohemia, was of the same tenor. In other words, the number seven contained a sort of unexplained mysticism, doubtless involving superstition. Yet this also was broken. Early in the Thirty Years' War Ferdinand II. had confiscated the electoral vote of the Count Palatine and granted it to the Bavarian line, while at the Peace of Westphalia the former was reinstated as eighth member under condition that should the Bavarian house disappear, the electorate would revert to the Palsgrave. In 1692, finally, Emperor Leopold I. granted a ninth vote to the House of Brunswick-Lüneburg. The electoral body, then, which at its very inchoation was the result of an error that confused the German kingdom with the Roman Empire and later usurped the prerogative of the Pope at Rome, also followed the general tendency of degeneration, which held the entire imperial fabric in its grip.

Ideal Emperors, who embodied in one person all the logical prerequisites of their office, were indeed few in number. If it was difficult for most of them to preserve peace in their entire realm and to be the fountain head from which righteousness and law emanate, it was well nigh impossible for them to bring the weight of spiritual unity to bear on their subjects. And what made matters still worse and perplexing for the Emperors throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries especially was the fact that the Popes themselves practically repudiated the theory of coextension of ecclesiastical and secular power,

resenting any interference in their affairs on the part of the temporal sovereigns. Originally the Emperor, as secular lord of Christendom, was the head of the entire system of knighthood and could even make and unmake kings at will. The proud words which in the year 1303 Boniface VIII. pronounced about him, the *Imperatorem et monarcham omnium regum et principum terrenorum*, to whom even the Gallic king is and should be subservient,¹¹ and the frank confession of Alfonso, King of Naples: *Nos reges omnes debemus reverentiam Imperatori, tamquam summo regi, qui est Caput et Dux regum*,¹² still adhere faithfully to the older ideal. It is a striking fact, too, that many of the champions of the Renaissance were friendly to the Empire, a phenomenon that may be explained chiefly on grounds of common hostility to the Pope. Petrarch and Dante both agree in this sentiment, the latter, especially, showing imperial tendencies thruout the entire *Purgatorio* and in the *De Monarchia*.¹³ The jurists of the time, also, are imperialists. However, in spite of the praise and enthusiasm of the theorists and visionaries, the Empire constantly sank lower. In the reign of Sigismund (1410–1438) we have the last instance of a general council, that of Constance, and the last occasion on which an Emperor exercised his function as an international figure. He sank presently to the position of a mere German monarch.

Materially, too, the Empire declined. Poland had been lost at the time of the Great Interregnum, West Prussia fell away, Bohemia became practically independent, Switzerland was recognized by Maximilian in 1500 as virtually autonomous, Burgundy was lost, and Italy passed entirely out of imperial jurisdiction. The Italian claims of the Emperors were relinquished only with the greatest reluctance. Dante constantly looked to Germany to relieve the political situation in northern Italy and this phantom hope of the imperialists did actually continue to exist for a long time. Other more clear-sighted

¹¹ Vid. Pfeffinger, *Corp. iur. publ.*, I., 377.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 379.

¹³ Cf. Bryce, p. 271 et passim.

writers, as for example, Matthew Villani, knew better.¹⁴ The nature of the Emperors, too, tended toward localization and assertion of nationalistic aims. For the later Hapsburg rulers, altho in some cases very powerful and influential, did little to strengthen the Holy Roman Empire as such. Under them it rather became narrower in its character, tending unmistakably toward Austrian nationalism. Maximilian, for instance, was a typical Archduke of Austria, who like his successors used the ancient traditions chiefly for the purpose of linking and holding together the discordant parts of his realm.

As far as actual political influence is concerned, the Renaissance was a movement of minor importance. Nevertheless it was instrumental in sweeping many an antiquated theory from the boards, among them the old-fashioned claims of the Empire. Not by any single, concerted act was this effected, but by a gradual infiltration of new ideas. Seemingly insignificant events, such as the introduction of the phrase *Deutscher Nation* into the imperial title, played an important rôle in reducing the Empire to a narrower but more practicable basis. The Reformation, on the other hand, was a factor of more immediate importance, a deathblow, as it were, to the imperial idea. Overthrowing, as it did, the very principle of the formal unity of the Church and erecting the standard of civil as well as religious liberty, the Reformation placed the Emperor in an incongruous position. To a part of his subjects, the Catholics, he was still the champion of the Church, but to the Protestants he was simply the nominal head of the nation. Consider the matter as one may, thru the Reformation he practically lost one half of his subjects, who, as Bryce well puts it (p. 385): "cherished again the feeling with which their ancestors had resisted Julius Cæsar and Germanicus." Imperial plans of restoring religious uniformity by violence failed; the land was rent asunder by an irreconcilable quarrel; not even an impartial mediator could be found to restore order.

The unfortunate Thirty Years' War brought no blessings in

¹⁴ Speaking of the possibility of the Emperors' continuing to rule Italy he says, IV., 77: *non lo fanno e non lo possono fare.*

its aftermath for anyone concerned. If it wrought any benefits at all, it proved that Emperor, Princes, Catholics and Protestants were mutually dependent on one another, more so than ever before. It furthermore deprived both the Empire and its head of the last vestige of superstitious reverence which had still clung to them. Both had been attacked before, now by a Pope, now by a publicist. But the seventeenth century bred a new type of critic, the Protestant jurist, whose forceful, bitter periods rendered all previous attacks feeble and jejune. These writers were the first to scoff at the Roman heritage of mere German kings and to point to the real functions of the latter. Two of the most noted, among them the jurist Chemnitz, or as he called himself Hippolytus a Lapide, and Pufendorf will be examined more closely in a later chapter.

By the Peace of Westphalia the hitherto insignificant imperial Diet was given a new lease of life, while the Aulic Council, the spoiled child of the Emperor, was restricted. Privileges and rights hitherto in the hands of the sovereign were delegated to the Diet. Moreover, non-Catholics were released from the jurisdiction of the Pope and the kings of France and Sweden were granted authority to interfere at will in imperial elections. Henceforth we are dealing no longer with a Roman, nor with a Romano-Germanic Empire, but with a structure of distinctly Germanic basis, a German aristocratic federation. In more than one sense it has hereafter no history at all. It simply continued for a while longer to lead a miserable, meaningless existence because its patient, slow-moving subjects lacked the initiative and in many cases the intelligence to effect its actual dissolution. It had now lost every conceivable virtue and all *raison d'être*. The Emperor, glorying only in empty sounding titles, lived in abject poverty and in order to be kept from doing harm, was kept from doing anything at all, as Dohm said, quoted by Bryce (p. 400) from Häusser's *Deutsche Geschichte*. The Kammergericht continued to meet, first at Speyer, later at Wetzlar, and became famous for its incredible dilatoriness and formalism and for its record of 60,000 undecided cases in 1806. As much may

be said of the Imperial Diet, which convened at Regensburg, attended by thirty ridiculously pedantic diplomatists, who did worse than waste their time. Emperor Francis II. performed a noble deed in relinquishing his Roman imperial rights, but his contemporaries were so little conscious even of the existence of a Holy Roman Empire that his resignation on August 6, 1806, passed by almost unnoticed.

Speaking broadly, we may say that ever since the middle of the eleventh century, from the time of Henry III., when the Empire reached the zenith of its power, every important event tended to loosen the cohesion of the structure. The growth of nationalism, the upas of feudalism, and the strengthening idea of popular freedom at the dawning of a new, modern era in the sixteenth century made its existence impossible. Furthermore the establishment of the Kingdom of Prussia in 1701 added new impetus to the evermore accelerating centrifugal forces. The grand climax, the Seven Years' War, in which Prussia resisted Austria, was then merely an inevitable consequence.

Since the present chapter is intended merely to present a survey of some salient historical facts regarding the rise and fall of the Empire, with a view to making more intelligible the discussion that is to follow, a detailed study of conditions in any one particular period, as for instance the eighteenth century, is postponed until later. Suffice it at present to note that we have examined both the virtues of the structure, thus enabling ourselves to appreciate any favorable criticism that literature may offer us, and also its many vices. On the latter we have dwelt with emphasis, since they offer us the key to the satirical literature on the Empire, which presents by far the more important and interesting aspect of our subject. One other phase of the question, patent and already suggested above, might with profit be discussed at present, viz., the baleful effect of the Empire on the political progress of Germany. Consciously or unconsciously the subject was in the mind of almost every writer who criticized the Empire, and in many cases, no doubt, helped to determine his attitude. It may con-

veniently be approached by a study of the development of national consciousness.¹⁵

There seems to be considerable difference of opinion on the question of early German patriotism. The historian Giesebricht, for example, in his *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*¹⁶ finds patriotism quite general thruout Germany from the rise of the Saxon dynasty to the fall of the Hohenstaufens. Lamprecht, however, probably with justification, throws doubt on the truth of such a statement.¹⁷ He shows above all that a belief in the importance of national consciousness together with its concomitant, national pride, is of comparatively recent growth. Racial and tribal consciousness supplanted it in earliest times. In Germany the predominance of the Franks was a deciding factor, until the period from the ninth to the eleventh centuries gradually built up a perceptible feeling of difference between Germans on the one hand and foreigners on the other. National consciousness in a political sense, however, was still non-existent, because the seemingly greater, worthier ideal of a Roman World-Empire absorbed it.

In examining with Carruth¹⁸ the more important authors of the period, we find that under the Saxon dynasty Ruotger's *Life of Bruno* (966 or 967) shows germs of national consciousness, while Widukind of Corvey¹⁹ represents a narrow Saxon point of view, and Liudprand, bishop of Cremona, is a staunch supporter of Otto the Great. Hrotswith of Gandersheim, too, is a frank admirer of the Saxon rulers, but regards the imperial Roman title as more exalted than that of German king. Bruno of Querfurt (1004) gives evidence of national patriotism, while Thietmar of Merseburg (1018) makes repeated reference to the *patria* and to the *regnum nostrum*²⁰ and calls

¹⁵ Cf. Carruth in Vol. II. of *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*.

¹⁶ Vol. I., pp. 215-216, but especially pp. 294-295. Giesebricht is very optimistic in this respect.

¹⁷ In his chapter entitled: *Geschichte des deutschen Nationalbewusstseins*, pp. 3-26 of Vol. I. of his *Deutsche Geschichte*.

¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁹ *Res Gest. Sax.*, 967.

²⁰ Introduction to Book I. of *Chron.* in *M. G. SS.*, p. 733.

Germans *Teutonici* in contradistinction to non-Germans. Under the Salian dynasty²¹ Berthold's *Annals* (1080) contain the first unequivocal mention of the German fatherland, and Walram of Naumburg in his *De Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda*, 1092, is conscious of the sad state of political dismemberment because of the conflict between the Pope and the Emperor. During the time of the Hohenstaufens more genuine literature of value was produced, but it is characteristic that the greatest works of the period, as the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Gudrunlied*, the writings of Hartmann von Aue, Gottfried von Strassburg and Wolfram von Eschenbach lack almost all conscious love of fatherland. Men of lesser importance, such as Otto of St. Blasien, who is "arrogantly patriotic,"²² hardly make up for the deficiency. Walther von der Vogelweide²³ takes a somewhat different stand. He is a friend of the Empire in his ideals and possesses a strong sense of personal allegiance to the crown, altho this may be conditioned in part at least by adulation. Undoubtedly he cherishes love for his country and a vivid feeling for the necessity of unity. Yet even his national pride is rooted primarily in a proud feeling of superiority of German court life and chivalry over similar customs in other lands. Modern patriotism was unknown to him.

If we trace the subject farther down in its historical development we find that with the decline of chivalry, national consciousness, such as exists, turns slowly to the citizen class and the rising municipalities and finds its best expression in the Hanseatic league. But the seductive splendor of the imperial crown, of the Empire, altho as early as the thirteenth century threatening to fall to pieces, held all elements spell-bound. Again after the Reformation, which gave a wonderful impetus to a more independent, individualistic mode of life, the time was ripe for a development of the feeling of unity and national pride. And once more the old menace, now in the form of an Hispano-Germanic empire ruled by Charles V.,

²¹ Vid. Carruth, p. 135 ff.

²² Carruth, p. 150.

²³ Walther's *Sprüche*, complaining about the hopeless condition of Germany and the contempt of the Popes for the land, are well known.

loomed large on the horizon. Under the circumstances, it seems, intellectual cohesion was the highest possible attainment in Germany, for as soon as the musty imperial organism had been buried, the country rapidly advanced toward political unity. Fortunately for Germany the wars of Frederick the Great had preceded the dissolution; fortunately, too, the French Revolution, with its subtle influence on Germany, came when it did and created a Napoleon. Such preliminary happenings added importance to the subsequent Wars of Liberation and made the momentous events of the fifty-five years which followed doubly significant.

In the light of what precedes, then, we shall undertake to study the reaction of the literary minds of Germany to the political condition of their native land.

CHAPTER II

THE PERIOD PRIOR TO 1500

As was pointed out in the preface and to some extent, too, in the course of the previous chapter, our study aims to lay particular emphasis on the satirical literature of the subject. For doubtless this presents not only the most interesting and significant aspect of the theme, but also the one which in the course of time became predominant as a result of the degeneration of the Empire. Hence some general remarks on the nature of satire will not be out of place.

In a short article published in the *Deutsche Rundschau*¹ entitled *Historisch-Politische Satiren*, Richard M. Meyer distinguishes between two classes of satire, first the ironical, which accentuates the vices and follies of the present by representing them favorably, and second the punitive, which constructs a climactic catalogue of the vices and follies of the present, with the purpose of emphasizing the ideal more sharply than by direct portrayal. A possible third order, which, however, merely blends the two preceding, he calls the Novo-Antique. It catalogues the foibles of the present, as it were, transfers them into some remote time and place and represents them serio-comically as applied to their new environment. A good example of the last mentioned device would be Wieland's *Abderiten*. But one characteristic is essential to all good satire, viz., it must be levelled at contemporary, still existent phenomena. The last statement immediately settles for us a chronological question, for it delimits our study in a definite way to the millenary period 800 A.D. to 1806. Literature which appeared subsequent to the year 1806 will, therefore, not concern us directly. When, for example, Grillparzer in

¹Vol. 138, pp. 67-70. Schiller includes satire in the category of *Sentimentalische Dichtung* and describes it as intellectual poetry in contradistinction to emotional poetry, represented by the elegy and the idyl.

the *Bruderswist*, and again especially toward the end of Act I. of *Ottokar*, introduces remarks that tend to disparage the Holy Roman Empire, we have interesting instances of an historical treatment of the theme, but no more.² In the case of Grillparzer's sources, naturally, the situation is different, for we are dealing there with direct, real satire. Pessina's *Mars Moravicus*, for instance, written in 1677, relates how Ottokar, at the height of his power and insolence, disparaged the title of Roman Emperor and contemptuously boasted that a King of Bohemia was far more than a Roman Emperor. This remark, as well as a similar one by the still earlier Czechish chronicler Wacek, bear more than mere historical significance, since the Empire still existed at the time.

In the light of what was said in the previous chapter, one would hardly expect satirical expression or unfavorable comment on the subject of the Empire or any phase of it before the Great Interregnum, or even later, altho, to be sure, signs of demoralization were traced back to the very time of Charlemagne. And, indeed, the facts in the case bear out this supposition. During the four and one half centuries after the coronation of Charles the Great we find a very negligible quantity of anti-imperialistic literature. The reasons are apparent. In the first place, before the period of the Middle High German classics, no German literature of importance existed. In the second place, the medieval mind could see nothing reprehensible in the World-Empire and its machinery. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed the gradual weakening of the charm, yet not until the sixteenth century, when men's intellect slowly began to be enlightened, do we meet works of a genuinely satirical character. But without anticipating, we shall examine first the period that preceded, an era of gradual preparation and development.

² So, too, in Wedekind's *Frühlings Erwachen* the teacher Zungenschlag says, Act III., Scene 1: *Es he-herrscht hier eine A-A-Atmosphäre wie in unterirdischen Kata-Katakomben, wie in den A-Aktensälen des weiland Wetzlarer Ka-Ka-Ka-Ka-Kammergerichtes.* Cf. also Baumbach's *Der Schwiegersohn*, where a quarrel in a tailor's shop is humorously compared with the struggles of Guelfs and Ghibellines in the Holy Roman Empire. Cf. finally Gerhart Hauptmann's *Festspiel*.

There is one point on which modern historians agree unanimously, to wit, the continuity of history, the fact that in it, as in geology, there are but few precise lines of chronological demarcation. To a large extent history is a manifestation of the theory of flux and reflux; the conventional periods, as found in the ordinary historical textbooks, are chiefly a convenient means of assisting the learner and are due more to precedent or to the arbitrariness of the writer than to inner necessity. Similarly we find it quite impossible to ascertain just when the first quip at the expense of the Holy Roman Empire was perpetrated, altho we can trace with readiness the causes that gave rise to a satirical attitude. And so it is whenever one deals with the gradual inculcation of an idea or a set of beliefs: in the great majority of cases the dissemination is due not to any individual but to the trend of the times.

Freidank.

The examination in the foregoing chapter of various literary sources up to the time of Walther von der Vogelweide tended to bring out the fact that, altho national German patriotism did not exist at the time, there was an abundance of zeal for the imperial cause, a condition which does not *per se* preclude coexistent satire, but at all events makes it rather unlikely. And in truth it would not be difficult to swell the chorus of pro-imperialism with further quotations dating from the same era or even later. Neidhart von Reuenthal, Ulrich von Lichtenstein, Der Marner, and Wernher der Gartenaere (*Meier Helmbrecht*) say nothing disparaging of the Empire, while the *Tegernseer Spicil vom Antichrist* (circa 1160), the only Church play that deals at all with politics, is very patriotic and pro-imperial, being a reflection of the first and more glorious half of the reign of Frederick I. (Barbarossa),³ and illustrating the medieval conception of the divine nature of the Empire. On the other hand, the way is by degrees being prepared for a less favorable attitude. For example, Pope Gregory VII.,

³ Vid. D. N. L., Vol. 14. Part I., p. 199 ff. Cf. also Golther, *Die deutsche Dichtung im Mittelalter*, p. 169 ff.

the famous Hildebrand, in a letter to the Bishop of Metz written in March, 1081, calls the imperial and the royal offices dangerous and says that their incumbents rarely attain salvation and are never honored by miracles, while their responsibilities are terrible.* Similarly the *Annolied*, written probably toward the end of the eleventh century, bemoans the lack of harmony in the Empire. Freidank, too, the author of the *Bescheidenheit*, who lived early in the thirteenth century, reveals iconoclastic tendencies. Compared, for example, with the less popular Thomasin von Zirclaere (*Der wälsche Gast*), who shows profound respect for the powers that be, Freidank is quite free in his views. Altho well disposed to the Empire, he sees in the Emperor after all only a human being, who is just as much subject to the torture of fleas or to the call of Death as anyone else. He even goes so far as to scorn princes and lords in general as a danger to the land because of their cankerous greed and insensate ambition and because of their lack of initiative and interest in the government. Speaking of their pusillanimous nature he says:⁵

*Tiuschii lant sint roubes vol:
Gerichte, voget, münze und zol
Diu wurden ê durch guot erdâht,
Nû sint si gar ze roube brâht.
Swaz ie man quotes âf geleit,
ze bezzen die kristenheit,
die hochsten und die hêrsten
die brechen ez zem êrsten.*

Otto von Freising.

Chronologically even earlier than Freidank is the famous chronicler Otto von Freising (ob. 1158), the author of the *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*. He, too, takes a novel and interesting attitude which did not become common until many centuries later. Not only does he refute the prev-

* Translated in Robinson: *Readings*, I., 284. Original in Doeberl: *Monumenta Germ. Histor. Sel.*, III., 40 etc.

⁵ Bezzenger, 75,24-76,1. For translations cf. Appendix A.

alent belief of his time that the Empire is a very venerable structure, a heritage left by ancient Rome, but he asserts that even if the proud claims of imperialists are true, the Empire has passed thru a long series of transformations which have given it an entirely new stamp. The rust and soot of time, he avers, have settled on it; it is diseased at its very apex, and the malady threatens to spread.⁶ As early as the twelfth century, then, expression was given to the heretical view that the Empire was not eternal and that time is bound to make changes in any organization of its kind.⁷

Shrovetide Plays.

The Shrovetide plays of the fifteenth century are usually not thought of in connection with satirical literature, yet one of these compositions, written probably by Rosenplüt, furnishes an interesting example of a political polemic. It is entitled *Des Turken Vasnachtspil*⁸ and is intended as a satire on the Empire and a eulogy of the city of Nuremberg. The citizens of the latter, solicitous for the welfare of the Holy Roman Em-

⁶ Ed. Adolf Hofmeister, 2d ed., p. 7-8: *Ut enim de aliis taceam, regnum Romanorum, quod in Daniele, propter totius orbis bello domiti singularem principatum quam Graeci Monarchiam vocant, ferro comparatur, ex tot alternationibus, maxime diebus nostris, ex nobilissimo factum est paene novissimum; ut de Urbe, Senatu, Populoque Romano, juxta poetam:*

Vix magni stet nominis umbra.

Ab urbe quippe ad Graecos, a Graecis ad Francos, a Francis ad Lombardos, a Lombardis rursum ad Teutonicos Francos derivatum, non solum antiquitate senuit, sed etiam ipsa mobilitate sui, veluti levis glarea, hac illaque aquis circumjecta, sordes multiplices ac defectus varios contraxit. Ostenditur igitur in ipso capite mundi, mundi miseria, ipsiusque occasus toti corpori minatur interitum.

⁷ Heresy was seriously brought forth as a charge against theorists holding such and similar views. Himly, p. 46, quotes Ubertus de Lampugnano (end of 14th century) in some theses defended at Prague as follows: *Si quis diceret Imperatorem romanum non esse monarcham et dominum totius universi in quo Christus colitur, esset haereticus, quia diceret contra determinationem Ecclesiae.* Authors, pro-imperialistic or with imperial learnings, as e. g., the Austrian didactic poet Peter Suchenwirt of the late fourteenth century, with his childlike faith in the Empire even in the days of King Wenzel, are frequent in every age and will be mentioned from time to time.

⁸ *Bibl. Lit. Ver. Stuttgart*, Vol. 28, p. 288 ff.

pire, have extended to the Sultan of Turkey a promise of safe-conduct and an invitation to come to Germany to hear a report of the evils that confront the Empire. With his followers the Moslem sovereign comes from the Orient, where everything is paradisaic and peaceful and where no taxes are levied. In Germany he finds things very different, for no one, it seems, can enjoy peace there. Some Germans, among them a knight and a noble, accost the Turkish party and upon inquiring about their mission are assured that the latter have come with good intentions. The Turkish Emperor gives a list of the worst sins committed by the Christians, among them usury, adultery, and the practise of false pride. Hereupon a messenger from the Pope comes and accuses the Turks of hostility to Christianity, but he is refuted by the Moslems, who hold the Christians more to blame for the spirit of mutual distrust. An imperial envoy now approaches and pours vituperation over the Turks, who answer very sarcastically and refuse to be driven away by threats. A messenger sent by the Electors pursues similar tactics and is likewise rebuffed. Finally two citizens of Nuremberg come and assure the Oriental ruler that his safe-conduct will not be violated. The latter in return promises his hosts that he will always be ready to reciprocate favors. If we consider that at the time when this extravaganza was written the very existence of the Empire was imperilled by the Turkish menace, we can the better appreciate the acrid irony of the situation here portrayed. There can be no doubt about the impression that it made on contemporaries; it brought home to every reader the hopeless discord and internal rottenness of the imperial government.

Brant.

Sebastian Brant's span of life extended well into the sixteenth century (ob. 1521), still he was a child of the earlier period in which he was born. His great work, *Das Narrenschiff*, appeared for the first time in 1494. Altho of no great originality, Brant is an interesting writer because he exem-

plifies a peculiar brand of subjectivity. He always thinks in terms of persons and personal interest. We cannot expect to find in him any new theories or epoch-making theses. His political ideal was the medieval doctrine of a close interrelation of the Empire and the Church. Emperor Maximilian was his idol; he even dreamt of the possibility of a fantastic fusion of the spiritual and temporal power in the person of his beloved ruler. Naturally, then, Brant is quite favorably inclined toward the Empire as an ideal institution, yet he is by no means purblind in regard to its actual shortcomings. In the section *Von end des gewaltes* he says that he has examined the history of every empire that ever existed and has found that without exception they came to an end. He adds (l. 90):⁹

*Das römsch rich blibt, so lang got will
Got hat jm gsetzt syn zutt und moss;
Der geb, das es noch werd so gross,
Das jm all erd sy underthon
Als es von recht und gsatz solt han.*

The chapter entitled *Von abgang des glouben* contains a passage on Rome and its history (ll. 95 ff.).¹⁰ Brant relates how the city flourished first under the kings, then under the republic, but how gradually lust for power frittered away the resources of the state. Thereupon the conversion of the republic into an empire was effected and for fifteen hundred years the process of waning continued. Addressing Rome directly he continues:¹¹

*Glich wie sich myndern düt der mon,
So er schwyndt und jm schyn gebrist,
Das yetz gar wenig an dir ist.
Well gott, das du ouch grösstest dich,
Do mit du sygst dem mon gantz glich.
Den dunckt nit, das er ettwas hab,
Wer nicht dem Römschen rich bricht ab!*

⁹ Zarncke ed., p. 57; Bobertag ed., p. 145.

¹⁰ Zarncke ed., p. 95; Bobertag ed., p. 270.

¹¹ Loc. cit.

The idea expressed in the last two lines is repeated, ll. 121 ff.:

*Ein yeder fürst der gantz bricht ab,
Das er dar von cyn fäder hab.
Dar umb ist es nit wunder gross,
Ob joch das rich sy blutt und bloss.*

The poet continues in the same vein, pleading with the princes to show more public spirit and patriotism, for, he says (ll. 143 f.), they are doing their level best to destroy their own Empire.

The above quotations from Sebastian Brant could scarcely be called satirical according to the accepted terminology. It is manifest, however, that they reveal both an attitude of mind and an outlook into the future which must be termed decidedly unfavorable, except for the fact that the author is in sympathy with his country and is concerned about its impending fate. They are, therefore, important as significant utterances of a serious-minded patriot, who is not blinded by passion to the existing political evils.

Folksong.

Doubtless one of the most illuminating genres of literature for the student of history in any of its various phases is the folksong. It has the advantage of directness and usually of simplicity; besides, in many cases it offers views that may safely be regarded as representative of the class from which they issue. For the present study, too, this utility is considerable. The great majority of folksongs extant in German literature, however, date from the sixteenth century or even more recent times and will, therefore, be treated in their proper chronological order in a later chapter. At present the earlier songs only, as they appear chiefly in the first two volumes of Liliencron and in Uhland¹² will demand our attention. It will be noticed that many of them are hardly intelligible to one

¹² R. v. Liliencron: *Die historischen Volkslieder der Deutschen vom 13. bis 16. Jahrhundert*, 4 volumes.

L. Uhland: *Alte hoch- und niederdeutsche Volkslieder*, 5 Bücher.

without an intimate knowledge of contemporary history, since they are replete with allusions to obscure events, representing in a sense the periodical reviews of current events and the daily newspapers of modern times. As far as is necessary, therefore, for a satisfactory comprehension of the point involved, an endeavor will be made to elucidate such allusions and covert references.

The earliest poem of interest, *Zu Feldkirch*, dated between 1334–1336,¹³ deals with an unsuccessful campaign on the part of Emperor Louis IV. against the town of Feldkirch near Lake Constance, undertaken as the result of a dispute about the appointment of a Bishop of Constance. It is manifestly satirical at the expense of the Emperor, heaping ridicule on his head for his impotence and braggadocio. Right at the outset the author smiles over the fact that Louis has howled so much about the incident that he has become hoarse as a result of his ululation. He himself is allowed to speak and expresses as follows his determination to capture the town:

*Das rich hat vil ze schaffen.
Ich will ze ainem affen
werden, als ich ze Merspurg wart.*

—an allusion to his inglorious failure to bring the inhabitants of the latter city to terms. Then with splendid irony the following boastful words are attributed to him:

*Ich half dem künig von Engellant;
der wer verdorben in den grunt,
wer ich im nit in kurzer stunt
se helfe kommen, er wer verlorn!*

—which represent a deliberate perversion of the truth. As a matter of fact Louis had negotiated with England to strengthen his *own* position against France and the Pope. He goes on to say with the greatest seriousness, apparently, that if in spite of his laudable efforts the city persists in its refusal to submit, he will resort to magic concoctions and the like. In conclusion

¹³ Liliencron, Vol. I., No. 11, p. 40 ff.

he advises his siege troops patiently to await his arrival, for altho he will be rather slow in coming, he will *ultimately* arrive on the scene of action:

Ir sond nit vernichten (i. e., *verszweifeln*)
ob ich ain wenig ze lange wer.
Enbicten mir alweg mär,
bi ainer wil so kom ich!

Von den Reichsfürsten, written circa 1385 by an adherent of the towns,¹⁴ is a longish poem, parts of it fragmentary and, therefore, obscure, satirizing in a malignant way the various imperial princes, among them the Archbishop of Mayence, the Palsgrave Rupert, the Duke of Bavaria and the Emperor Wenzel himself. The latter, it is claimed, was entirely too young at the time of his election (he was a boy in his teens) and was chosen because of influence and wealth. But the allusions thruout are mainly personal, altho of course a certain feeling of dissatisfaction with the Empire is revealed. In *König Wenzels Landfriede*,¹⁵ circa 1398, we have a more general treatment of conditions in the Empire and of the Emperor's impotence in quelling anarchical feuds, which became increasingly worse until the election of Rupert of the Palatinate to the kingship (1400). The occasion of this quip was the proclamation of a general peace by Wenzel, a useless measure, because the Emperor lacked all power for its execution. The author indulges in merciless ridicule of the manifesto and slyly reports that he has received from another source the following precious bit of information:

man het es an die lüte gelan
und sol der krieg in satzunge stan
bis dass die fünve sesamene kumen
als ich die rede han vernumen,
dass sü dem krieg süllent stillen
mit der hern und stete willen.
Die fünf will ich üch nennen,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 30, p. 99 ff.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 41, p. 201 ff.

so mügent ir sii erkennen.
Der erste ein bader wesen sol,
der nic geswitzete, merkent wol.
Den anderen ich hie erzong:
ein underkörper der nie gelong.
Den dirten nemne ich an dirre sal:
ein müller der nie gestal.
Den vierden nemne ich an dirre frist:
einer der rüdig oder kretzig ist
und do bi nie gegucket hat,
der füget wol an diesen rat.
Der fünfte sol ein spiler sin,
der do reiset bi dem win,
alle tage tribet ungewür
und doch do bi nie geswür.

To the casual observer it seems surprising that many of the folksongs of the time, in fact, the majority of them, are not unfavorable to the Empire, altho the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were dark times, indeed. This phenomenon admits of at least two explanations. The first, the fatalistic belief in the Holy Roman Empire, a theory from which it was impossible to wean the medieval mind, has been sufficiently described. The second is the fact that many of the so-called *Volkslieder* are not what they purport to be, but rather songs composed expressly at the command or desire of a lord or ruler. A good example is the poem *Türkenschrei* of 1453¹⁶ on the occasion of the fall of Constantinople, which was undoubtedly written at the imperial behest; another, *Von Kaiser Fricdrich*,¹⁷ was written in 1471, when the Emperor appeared in the Empire proper for the first time in almost a quarter of a century. It praises Frederick profusely, altho he little deserved commendation of any kind. Liliencron is probably right in calling it *bезahlte Arbeit*.

Other songs again are not altogether satirical in intent but contain serious and friendly admonition and advice. Rosenplüt's *Von den Türcken*,¹⁸ 1459, is a fair instance. It urges

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 100, p. 460.

¹⁷ Liliencron, Vol. II., No. 126, p. 3.

¹⁸ Liliencron, Vol. I., No. 109, p. 503 ff.

the Emperor to utilize the Turkish peril as a means of bringing the powerful princes, as for example Margrave Albrecht Achill, to terms, and it warns him not to bungle the task, for:

*der koch ist wol strafens wert,
verselzet er die speise.*

In recalling to mind the terrible defeat of the Imperials at the hands of the Hussites in 1431, Rosenplüt compares the Empire to a donkey that is lashed into submissiveness. He urges the destruction of the eternal foes, the "planing down" of nobles and lords and the adequate protection of the imperial cities. That he considered extravagance among the upper classes an additional curse on the land appears in his prose *Türkenspiel* of 1456,¹⁹ a sort of continuous dialogue between a Turk and an Imperialist. Hans Folz, too, is in the main a friend of the Empire, yet he says in his *Ystoi vom Römischen Reich* (1480):²⁰

*Das weltlich swert ist gancz verrost
Das geistlich det noch was es solt
Wern neür die haupt ein ander holt
Und stünd ein fürst dem andern pey
So plib die christenheyt wol frey
Vor aller unglaubigen rot
So ist eins clag des andern spot.*

Von dem striit und der slacht vor Granson, 1476,²¹ tells of the defeat of the imperial troops, allied with those of Charles of Burgundy, at the hands of the Swiss:

*Oesterrich, du slafest gar lang,
dass dich nit weckt der vogelsang,
hast dich der mette versumet!*

Emperor Frederick had sent his nephew Sigmund to the assistance of Charles, but some of the imperial troops had ob-

¹⁹ Quoted *ibid.*, p. 505.

²⁰ *Bibl. Lit. Ver. Stuttg.*, Vol. 30, p. 1320.

²¹ Liliencron, Vol. II., No. 138, p. 74.

served their usual custom of arriving on the battlefield late. The author comments on the defeat:

*Von schandlicher flucht ward nie geseit,
des fröwe dich, alle christenheit,
es wer dir hart ergangen,
het Burgunn gewonnen einen rung,
alls römsch rich het genomen ein sprung,
es ward darumb angewangen!
Darumb tet billich römisch rich
ein merklich bistand desgelich,
mag menglich briefen und merken.
Ich kouft nit fründschaft umb ein brot,
der mich verliessen in der not
und mich erst wolten sterken!*

Remarks that reflect no glory on the Empire!

An incident which could be considered extremely comical, were it not for the fact that it bewrays the thoroly rotten condition of the Empire even in Maximilian's day, is related in a collection of poems appearing in Liliencron II., p. 295 ff. The most important of the series also is found in Uhland.²² It relates how the beautiful heiress, Anna of Bretagne, married by proxy to the Roman King Maximilian, was kidnapped by Charles VIII. of France, who disregarded his own betrothed, Margaretha of Austria, at the time still a minor. The spectacle of the nominally powerful heir-apparent to the loftiest temporal position in the world reduced practically to the state of a mendicant, who goes from court to court begging for help, so that he may raise an army to assert his outraged rights,²³ is pitiful indeed.

During the first years of Maximilian's reign difficulties between the Empire, especially the Swabian League, and the Swiss Confederation arose and led to the so-called Swabian War. The crux of the matter was an attempt on the part of the Imperialists once more to force upon the Swiss the vasalage of the Empire. Many songs were composed by ad-

²² *Das Fräulein aus Britannia*, 1491. Uhland, No. 173, p. 455 ff.

²³ Cf. *Von dem kaiserlichen her.* Liliencron, II., No. 181, p. 302 ff.

herents of both sides. Among those of pro-Swiss leanings is *Ein new lied von den Schwizern und von dem schweibischen bund*²⁴ of 1495, which warns Maximilian that whoever attacks the Confederates unjustly will be defeated, for (Str. 26) :

*Got der ist ir herre,
Maria des gelich,
sie fiercn on all schwere
im schild das römischt rich.*

When soon after the imperial forces were decisively defeated by the Swiss in the battle of Dorneck, *Ein Schweizerlied wider dic Schwaben* (1499)²⁵ was written to describe the event and to ridicule the vanquished foe, especially the Swabians.²⁶ Among the songs composed by pro-imperialistic writers two are notable because they afford an honest insight into contemporary conditions. One, by Mathes Schantz,²⁷ shows sincere interest in the Empire, but referring to the successful imperial war levy of 1495, urges the people not to let the government lure money out of their pockets, nor to await cunctatory attempts on the part of the Emperor to introduce reforms, but to use their resources according to their own discretion. The other, *Ain spruch von den Schweizern*, 1500,²⁸ mentions the peace made at Basel that was unfavorable to the Imperialists. Altho bitter against the "perfidious Swiss," the author ruefully admits the weakness of the Empire.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 197, p. 370.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 208, p. 413 ff.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 210, p. 420 ff., pokes more fun at the defeated Swabians.

Str. 3: *die hand vil silber und ouch gold,
si mögend geben richen sold
und ligend an iren betten.*

In Strophe 37 the Bishop of Mayence is addressed:

*Bischof von Menz mit dienem gedicht,
das sehaftist mit dim gadengericht, (satirical for kammergericht)
du woltist die eidgnossen darin zwingen:
kemist zu inen in das gestreng,
du gewünst werlich vil zu eng,
Mit inen mustest ringen.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 202, p. 386.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 211, p. 427 ff.

CHAPTER III

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

A glance at any standard work on German history in general, as for example that of Johannes Janssen,¹ or on the more restricted field of purely literary endeavor, shows that the sixteenth century was an age abounding in trenchant satire and keen lampoons. Many reasons for this fact are patent; the majority of them grow directly out of the very nature of the period. Literary critics have hitherto devoted much fruitful labor to the subject, but, it seems, they have always contemplated with predilection certain phases which relate to ecclesiastical or purely social phenomena. To be sure, the great bulk of available material does concern these aspects and, moreover, the keenest minds of the time were occupied with them. Yet events political assume thruout the period a place of no small importance.

It was pointed out in a general way in the introductory chapter that the sixteenth century marks a quickened tendency on the part of writers to express themselves in a satirical vein regarding the Empire. The earlier formative years, which we considered above, had furnished the necessary acceleration, a prerequisite which if once attained gives the genus satire both virility and endurance. The age of the Reformation and of the Renascence attests both of these qualities in connection with our subject. But not only in the literature of the time does this satirical attitude become apparent; the very documents of the Empire itself more than once offer a reflex of prevailing sentiment. So for instance an official duodecennial confirmation of the Swabian League for the year 1500, made at Halle in the diocese of Würzburg in 1501 thru the apostolical cardinal Raymond of Gurck, in whose hands Pope

¹ *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes.* Vol. I., p. 272 ff. and Vol. VI., p. 195 ff.

Alexander placed a bull enjoining upon him the pacification of the princes, the cessation of hostilities and the confirmation of the league,² couched in the formal style of the chancellery, contains an interesting sentence, the manifest object of which is to condone the imperial sins of omission. After mentioning the various parties to the agreement, the Cardinal says:³ *Et licet Imperii vires ad eam (i. e., Ligam) conservandam ac defendendam per se sufficient, tamen Principes Lige praefate ac eorum Senatus Illustris in Civitate Hallensi existentes nos obsecrarunt, quatenus Pacis ac ejusdem Declarationis nec non ac Ligae Suevorum Unionis ac Jurisdictionis prorogate Sedis Apostolice confirmationem ac munimen apponere dignaremur.* A very diplomatic way, indeed, of suggesting that the imperial power after all left something to be desired! The account of the election of Emperor Charles V. at Frankfurt, June, 1519,⁴ is also of interest in this respect. The speeches of the Archbishop of Mayence, particularly, bring out the weaknesses of the Emperor and the Empire as well as the ill repute which the latter suffered in foreign countries.⁵

Sachs.

Hans Sachs, the prolific Mastersinger-cobbler of the time, is usually not regarded as a political thinker, still his contributions in this line are considerable. It is quite generally known that he was intensely pro-imperialistic in his sentiments. His many *Türkengedichte*, for example, which deal with the theme of Turkish invasions into the Empire and methods of meeting the menace,⁶ are sincere in their appeal to the dormant patriotism of his contemporaries. The two poems, again, that he devoted to the entry of the Roman King Ferdinand, the

² Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique*, IV., 1, p. 4-5, No. 2.

³ *Loc. cit.* For translations cf. Appendix A.

⁴ Dumont-Rousset, *Supplement*, Vol. IV., *Ceremonial of the Imperial Court*, p. 568.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 569 and 577.

⁶ Examples are *Vermonung zu ainem statlich Dürcken-zug an das Reich*, Keller-Goetze, Vol. 22, pp. 373-379, and *Ein klag zu Gott über die grausam wütarey des grausamen Türcken ob seinen viel kriegen und obsigen*, Keller, Vol. 2, p. 434 ff. Both poems were written in 1532.

heir-apparent to the imperial office, into Nuremberg in 1540,⁷ and the visit that the Emperor Charles V. himself made in the following year,⁸ show great interest in imperial activities. To be sure, such descriptions are found even before Sachs' day,⁹ but with the latter they gained a distinctly personal touch. One is, in fact, tempted to compare especially his *Kayserliche mayestat Caroli der V. einreyten* with the word-picture that Goethe gives in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* of the coronation festivities of Joseph II. at Frankfurt in 1765 and to hazard the conjecture that Goethe received suggestions from Sachs—an easy possibility.

It may be of interest, too, to examine some of Sachs' longer versified political tracts. Poetry they can hardly be called, for it seems certain that even their author intended them for educative or journalistic purposes, easier to remember and more pleasant to read in verse form. Important among these works is the rather longish *Historia. All römisch kayser nach ordnung, wie lang yeder geregiert hat, zu welcher Zeit, was sitten der gehabt und was todtes er gestorben sey, von dem ersten an bis auff den yetzigen grossmächtigsten kayser Carolum 5.* (1530).¹⁰ Right at the outset Sachs announces that the history of the Roman line of Emperors is varied, eventful and difficult. He begins with Julius Cæsar and patiently presents a mass of names, dates and alleged facts, following at times mere rumored reports, occasionally committing downright errors. He mentions the bipartition of the Empire under Constantine with no further comment. One of his prime considerations is always: Was the Emperor in question a Christian? After the Eastern Emperor Zeno we are told of the now ensuing Interregnum in the West, i. e., Italy, which lasted 330 years (in reality 324). Under the year 800 the revival of the Western line by Charles the Great is announced, but peculiarly enough the Pope is not mentioned in connection with the matter. Charles the Great is not considered a Ger-

⁷ Keller, Vol. 2, pp. 427-432.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 381 ff.

⁹ Cf. that of Folz in Keller *Fastnachtsspiele*, III., 1208.

¹⁰ Keller, Vol. 2, pp. 353-372.

man. Some hundred years after the death of Charlemagne the division of his realm into Germanic and Gallic sections is referred to. Under the year 962 the coronation of Otto the Great is noted; Otto is called the first specifically German Emperor. The famous pilgrimage of Henry IV. to Canossa is portrayed and Sachs of course sides with the Emperor against the Pope Gregory VII. The Great Interregnum is not emphasized. Rudolf I. of Hapsburg is praised for restoring order in the rapidly decentralizing Empire; Maximilian is lauded to the skies and his exploits are rather minutely described. According to Sachs, then, the Holy Roman Empire of his day was not only a direct continuation of the old Roman Empire of Augustus, but the selfsame structure. He pays a minimum of attention to the Pope. Apparently he has no conception whatsoever of the medieval theory of the Empire.

Another poem that supplements the foregoing: *Histori: Das römisch reich*,¹¹ is in the form of a dialogue between the poet and an *erenholt*, an omniscient herald, who relates how the Roman Empire originated, how it changed, and how it fell into the hands of the *töblich teutsche nation*. The informant without compunction begins with Romulus, works his way tediously up to "Caius Julius," with whom the Empire proper begins. Then follow the essential facts given in the previous catalogue with some important additions. Chief among these is the account of the gentlemen's agreement between Pope Gregory V. and Emperor Otto III. for the establishment of the Electorate, which subsequently, says Sachs, elected all emperors. He mentions the seven Electors, among them the King of Bohemia, and accords the latter the position of leader. This poem, like all others of Sachs on the subject, ends with good wishes for the Empire and reveals Sachs as a sincere patriot and imperialist. He was evidently greatly interested in the Romano-Germanic Empire and delighted in contemplating its history and ancient customs. Furthermore he shows great concern for its welfare, altho he leaves the Popes out of consideration as much as possible.

¹¹ Keller-Götze, Vol. 16, pp. 192-196.

But it would be wrong to claim that Sachs is a blind imperialist, for he realized as well as any man of his day the shortcomings of the medieval imperial system. It redounds to his credit that he repeatedly expressed his honest opinion on the subject in terms that could not be misunderstood. In fact, some of the most brilliant satire on the theme is from his pen. One of the very best of his compositions pertinent to our topic is *Ein artlich gesprech der götter, die zwietracht des römischen reichs betreffende*, 1544,¹² written in the last period of Charles V.'s fourth war against France. It relates how one night, when he was in his fiftieth year, Sachs lay awake worrying about the discord of the Roman Empire in which diets met and deliberations were held every day but without success, for no progress could be discerned. Finally he fell asleep and had a dream. The angel Genius visits him and takes him up to heaven, promising to show him there something of interest. He is conducted to a hidden place from which he can observe an assembly of the gods. Jupiter opens the meeting and presents the topic for discussion, the strife and discord of the Holy Roman Empire as well as ways and means of checking the evil (ll. 43 ff.):

*Ihr götter all gleich,
Es hat das römisch reich
Sambt teutscher nation
Zwitracbt und widerspon,
Unnd wirt man nit ableynen
Unnd gütlichen vereynen
Die zwispelting parthey,
Das fried zwischen ihn sey,
So muss das reich zergehn,
Mag lenger nit bestehn.*

Mars speaks first; he suggests that the various factions be incited to war, that the most powerful be allowed to win and to rule over the rest. Jupiter objects to this plan as too sanguinary and destructive and asks Juno, the goddess of marriage, to suggest a more peaceful plan in the form of a new

¹² Keller, Vol. 4, pp. 176-188.

marital union. But Juno can only point to the then recently contracted marriage of Francis I. and Eleonora, sister of Charles V., and confesses her inability to do more. She advises the use of gold for the purpose of establishing peace and concord. Thereupon Pluto is commanded to distribute gold among the princes, but he shows that this would only lead to worse quarreling and suggests the introduction of poverty. The goddess Penury, however, argues that such a plan would bear no better results and moves that Mercury descend to earth to compel peace in Jupiter's behalf, threatening all recalcitrants with summons to the supreme court of Jupiter. But this scheme, too, is found unfeasible because of the dogmatic obstinacy and hypocrisy of the factions. First, says Mercury, the darkness, i. e., the discord, must disappear. But the luminiferous god Phebus avers that this also would be of no avail, for sophistry and cunning can turn even light to darkness. Saturn angrily breaks in with an impatient suggestion to burn, murder and eradicate all who violate the peace—a method that strikes Jupiter as too bellicose. Now Minerva has a happy thought. She knows of a person, Res publica or Gmein-nutz (i. e., general concern for the public welfare, personified), who alone can cure the ills of the world. He has, however, disappeared from the midst of men. No one seems able to ascertain his whereabouts. Mercury is certain that he is not to be found in any of the imperial cities, and Luna can only recall having seen him many years ago, leaving Europe and seeking his old haunts in Greece and Asia. Jupiter confesses that he can now understand the plight of the Empire (ll. 297 ff.):

*Erst nimbt michnymmer wunder,
Das es so ubel geht,
Im reich zwitrechtig steht,
Weyl der gemeyne nutz,
Des römischen reiches schutz,
Wont bey öbern noch untern.
Mich thut vil mehr verwundern
Das römischi reich vor langen
Jarn nicht zu grund ist gangen.*

At last Diana solves the mystery. On one of her recent hunts she remembers having found this selfsame Gmein-nutz far off in the woods at a spring, weeping, but he hastened off in shame as he saw her approaching. Mercury is forthwith sent down to earth to fetch him, but soon returns with the report that he has found the poor wretch suffering terribly from countless wounds and at the point of death. Immediately the surgeon Aesculapius is detailed to accompany Mercury on a first aid expedition to Gmein-nutz. Whether they arrive in time is left untold, for the rooster crows in Sachs' barnyard and awakens his master.

Surely this is a thoughtful and well elaborated investigation on the subject of the ills and weaknesses of the Holy Roman Empire of Sachs' day. It is replete with satire on the aimless and petty quarrels of the time, on the impotence of the rulers and princes to get together for the purpose of evolving a strong centralized government, and on the tendency of the age toward particularism. The poem presents not only great and vital political problems, but offers a basis for their healthy solution as well. It reveals the workings of an acute, altho ruggedly artless, ingenuous mind.

Another poem on a germane topic is: *Der klagend ernholt über fürsten und adel* (1539),¹³ a severe complaint against the degeneracy of the princes and nobles, who have become haughty and arrogant, who sell or pawn their lands as well as appurtenances and squander the money thus realized. The colloquy *Ein artlich gesprech der götter, warum so viel ubler regenten auff erden sind* (1553)¹⁴ offers another explanation. Phebus has fallen in love with Luna and has seduced her. As punishment for both, Jupiter proclaims that neither the sun nor the moon shall shine for a full year. Most of the other gods vehemently oppose this drastic punishment, especially so Gmein-nutz, who again appears as a debilitated old man, a sad wreck. But relentlessly Jupiter adheres to his threat and lets destruction take its course, altho the earth itself is innocent.

¹³ Keller, Vol. 3, pp. 565 ff.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 7, pp. 268 ff.

Sachs offers the moral. As it is in heaven so it is on earth: the rulers are invariably surrounded by wise councillors, but in their stubbornness refuse to accept well meant advice:

*Wie es geht bey den himlischen,
So geht es auch bey den irrdischen
Herrschafoten, die wol frü und spet
Umb sich haben vil weyser rhet,
Den selben volgens aber nicht,
Sondern sie werden abgericht
Von niedischen, heuchlern und alfantern
Und den eigennützing finantzern.*

The poem *Ein clagred Deutschlands und gesprech mit dem getrewen Eckhart* (1546)¹⁵ gives us a conversation that ensues between the faithful Eckhart and a wretched, unhappy woman, Deutschland, who wanders about in the woods, pregnant and with dishevelled hair. The eagle should lawfully be her protector, but is persecuting her with murderous intent and is being egged on by the many bats, owls, and other nocturnal birds that Germany has nurtured as her pet companions and who are now hypocritically pretending innocence and concern for the welfare of Deutschland. As a result the latter is slowly being tortured to death. The eagle is, of course, intended to symbolize the Emperor, while the sycophant birds represent the other princes, primarily those responsible for the condition of Germany in the fifth decade of the sixteenth century, when the Reformation struggle was still in its zenith. On another occasion, in *Ein gesprech mit den 9 muese, wer doch ursprüncklicher ursacher sey der aufruer im Tewtschlandt* (1553),¹⁶ Sachs asks the muses for the prime causes of the plight in which the country finds itself and is told that Jupiter is becoming too lax in his regimen over the earth and that his evil councillors, as Faithlessness, Envy, Arrogance, Avarice, etc., have gained the day. These works present additional examples of Sachs' custom of calling attention to the crying evils of the time. Yet it is not the principle of *saeva indignatio*

¹⁵ Keller-Goetze, Vol. 22, pp. 352 ff.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, pp. 17-26.

that he applies; it is a higher form of satire, more kindly and more tolerant, but just as effective to boot.

Altho Hans Sachs was a member of the better middle class, he cannot, of course, be termed a Humanist. The mythological element, so apparent in the poems cited, is merely a literary influence of his forerunners and is used by him in order to present abstract facts in concrete form and thus to make them more intelligible to the average mind. But one cannot help suggesting yet another purpose hidden in this peculiarly naïve mode of exposition. Even the casual reader notes that in the majority of the works in which we are introduced to the celestial court of Jupiter, notably in *Ein artlich gesprech der götter, warum so viel ubler regenten auff erden sind* and again in *Ein artlich gesprech der götter, die zwietracht des römischen reichs betreffende* there is rank discord even among the gods, that Jupiter is quite helpless in the face of it, and that he is swayed by every new opinion as a weathercock by the changing wind. It seems, therefore, that this is nothing more than very subtle satire at the expense of the Emperor, who was in a very similar predicament. This conjecture is also borne out by another poem of the same kind: *Ein gesprech der götter wider den aufrüerischen fuersten margraff Albrecht und ander fürsten und stet Deutschlands* (1554).¹⁷ Here again Jupiter is hard put to it by his colleagues for his laxness, but confesses his impotence in calling to account his many enemies, as Pluto, Proserpina and Mars, who do as they please. He can only hold forth promises for the future, after he has settled accounts with his worst adversary, Neptune—a hidden reference, it seems, to the Turkish miasma.

Other material relating to Sachs is so intimately connected with Goethe that discussion of it is postponed until a later chapter.

Reformation.

By far the most momentous event of the time with which we are dealing, the Reformation, or as it is sometimes speciously called, the Protestant Revolt, evoked from all classes a

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, pp. 34-45.

mass of polemic literature, as was noted above. Not only the great immortal thinkers of the time, as Luther, Hutten, and Erasmus, but a host of insignificant, untalented small fry broke vociferously into print. There is a tendency to call their numerous products by a single appellation, satire, tho the majority of them are merely long-winded, jejune disquisitions on obscure points, provided with alluring but ungainly titles that were calculated to befool the reader. The theological chatter of these obscure writers does not concern us here; not so, however, their attitude toward the imperial temporal power.

Hutten.

It will first be in order to discuss to some extent the utterances and views of the more prominent agitators, Ulrich von Hutten and Martin Luther. Altho Hutten was the younger of the two, his span of life was destined to come to an end some twenty-three years before Luther's; consequently we take him up for consideration prior to the great Reformer. As Francke points out,¹⁸ Hutten was a man of practical ideals, the most cherished of which was the centralization of the Empire. He constantly hoped for the dawn of a new era of national culture,¹⁹ sounded the call, in his epigrams to Emperor Maximilian, against the foreign enemies of the Empire, especially Venice, France and the Pope,²⁰ and endeavored to unite the Emperor, princes, knights and cities in a great alliance for freedom.²¹ Like Sachs and also Franz von Sickingen he represents the best ideals of his time by his patriotic admiration for the Empire, Germanic in its makeup and limits, and his clear-sighted discernment of its glaring weaknesses. In a poem entitled *Beklagunge der Freistette deutscher Nation oder Vormanung an die freien und reich Stette teutscher Nation*²² he complains of the venality of the imperial crown at the elec-

¹⁸ Kuno Francke: *Personality in German literature before Luther*, pp. 185-186.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

²² D. N. L., Vol. 17², p. 275 ff.

tion of Emperor Charles V., while in his *Clag und vormanung gegen dem übermässigen, unchristlichen gewalt des Bapsts zu Rom*²³ he speaks in a satirical vein (ll. 824 ff.):

*Wie könt man auch regieren wol,
Wenn wer das Reich nit pfaffen vol?
Drumb steet es auch so wol im Reich,
Und gschicht ein yeden recht und gleich!*

Similarly in the interesting *Dialogus oder gesprech büchlin die Anschawenden genant*, a colloquy between Sol and Phaeton, the author waxes satirical. Speaking of the general discord in the Empire, Sol says:²⁴ *Es sind auch zwischen jren* (i. e., of the Germans) *Fürsten zwittracht und stetes heymlich krieg, in welchen sye sich verderben.* Phaeton asks: *Mag dann der Keyser die nit stillen?*, whereupon Sol answers: *Sölt der sye stillen, so sye jm nutz seind? Dann wo sye sich nit also untereynander verderbten, wären sye jm vil zu mächtig.*

Luther.

Preserved Smith makes the statement²⁵ that Luther “cared little or nothing for politics in themselves, partly because of his direct reliance on God, partly because he felt himself ill qualified to advise on such matters.” As is frequently the case when one considers a voluminous writer, especially one of Luther’s temperament, a dogmatic statement of this kind may be fortified by quotations, but again may be refuted by others. An apathetic attitude on the part of Luther toward politics may for example be attested by citations from his letter of March 5, 1522, to Frederick, Elector of Saxony,²⁶ in which he argues strongly against any opposition to the Emperor; from another letter of December 12, 1530, to the Elector of Saxony,²⁷ in which, after the formation of the League of Schmalkalden, he opposes extra-legal means of resisting the

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 247–248.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

²⁵ *Life and Letters of Martin Luther*, p. 214.

²⁶ *Frankfurt-Erlangen Briefe*, Vol. I., p. 108.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 201.

Emperor and the Catholics; from a third letter to the same addressee, dated March 6, 1530,²⁸ which maintains that the Emperor must be obeyed at all events while he holds his position; and from the words of a letter of May 29, 1523, to Elector Frederick:²⁹ (*ich*) *mag E. K. G. mit gutem Grund schreiben, dass mein Gemuth und Meinung . . . nie gewest, auch noch nicht ist, Jemand's von hohen oder niederen Ständen zu schmähen, oder ichts zu schreiben oder lehren oder predigen, das zu Bewegung, Ungehorsam, Uncinigkeit und Aufruhr im heil. Reich oder die Christen-Menschen in Irrung zu führen, Ursach geben mugt, dawider ich auch oftmals hart geschrieben und gepredigt habe.* On the other hand a strong case may be evolved to show Luther's varied, kaleidoscopic activity in the field of politics. Georg Jäger, for instance, in an article on the subject³⁰ cites the letter of July 13, 1521, to Melanchthon³¹ to prove this contention. A letter to Lazarus Spengler of February 15, 1531,³² written soon after the deliberations at Torgau, at which Luther had allowed himself to be convinced of the righteousness of an appeal to force against the Emperor, furnishes additional proof. Soon after his anti-imperial, quietistic *Zwei keyserliche uneinige und wydewertige Gepott* of 1524³³ the seriousness of the Turkish danger, too, became apparent to him, and he wrote in 1526 *Ob Kriegsleutte auch ynn seligem Stande seyn künden*³⁴ and in 1529 *Vom Krige wider die Türken*,³⁵ urging upon all Christians a cessation of internal hostilities for the purpose of meeting the common foe.

In many respects Luther is a typical representative of his time, an admirer of the imperial idea. We cannot, however, call him a conservative or a disinterested onlooker, but a much

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 138.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 165-166.

³⁰ *Die politischen Ideen Luthers und ihr Einfluss auf die innere Entwicklung Preussens—in Preuss.* *Jb.* 1903, Vol. 113, pp. 210-275.

³¹ *De Wette*, Vol. II., p. 23.

³² *Frankfurt-Erlangen Briefe*, Vol. II., p. 213.

³³ *Weimar ed.*, Vol. 15, p. 254 ff.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 623 ff.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 30², p. 107 ff.

concerned, critical spectator of events. On the whole he bore no malice to the Emperor, as he assures the Elector of Saxony on April 16, 1531,³⁶ alleging that in his pamphlets he wishes only to impart Christian instruction and to discover the evil practices and abuses perpetrated in the Emperor's *name*. To Nicholas Hausmann (June 16, 1533), too, he confesses reverence for the Emperor, and in the *Warnunge an seine lieben Deutschen*³⁷ he speaks of his "beloved Emperor Charles," who has won the respect and affection of the whole world. Yet in dealing with the Emperor as with aught else Luther was extremely candid. When for example Charles V. styled himself the chief protector of the Christian faith, Luther angrily rejoined in *Zwei keyserliche uneinige und wydderwertige Geþott*:³⁸ *Denn hie sihestu, wie der arme sterbliche Madensack, der keyser, der seyns lebens nicht eyn augenblick sicher ist, sich unverschampf rhümet, Er sey der ware ôbrister beschirmer des Christlichen glawbens.* To Johann Ludicke, February 8, 1539,³⁹ he speaks of the Emperor as one of the "heathen tyrants"; in the *Warnunge an seine lieben Deutschen* he warns the Emperor not to resort to arms against the Evangelicals and renounces his allegiance to the former:⁴⁰ *Wiltu aber dein Tauffepflicht und Christlichen bund mit Christo gemacht nit halten, sondern verfolgen, So sey dir ein schalk an meiner stat gehorsam, Ich wil umb deinen willen nicht meinen Gott lestern und sein wort verfolgen.* Elsewhere in the same work⁴¹ he abuses the Emperor for being a mere puppet in the hands of the Pope. To Jonas (March or April, 1540)⁴² he says that "the Emperor was, is, and ever will be a servant of the servants of the devil," and to Amsdorf (Oct. 21, 1545)⁴³ he calls him a miscreant (*nequam*). It is apparent, then, that to some

³⁶ Frankfurt-Erlangen *Briefe*, Vol. II., p. 224.

³⁷ Weimar ed., Vol. 30³, p. 291. Cf. also Frankfurt-Erlangen, Vol. I., pp. 109, 115; Vol. II., p. 1, and Weimar ed., Vol. 18, p. 357.

³⁸ Weimar ed., Vol. 15, p. 278.

³⁹ Enders-Kawerau *Briefwechsel*, Vol. 12, p. 87.

⁴⁰ Weimar ed., Vol. 30³, p. 299.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁴² De Wette, Vol. V., p. 275.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 764.

extent Luther contradicts himself in the course of his life on the subject of temporal power and its head. Without being able to discuss this phase of the topic any further at present, we refer merely to a good treatise on the subject by Erich Brandenburg.⁴⁴

Concerning the future of Germany Luther was very pessimistic. He wrote to Lauterbach on one occasion (Nov. 10, 1541)⁴⁵ that he almost despaired of the Empire; a similar sentiment he expressed to Jonas (Mar. 7, 1543).⁴⁶ What caused him the greatest anxiety was the absolute lack of national feeling among the native princes, a condition for which Grisar,⁴⁷ whose attitude toward the Reformer is, of course, anything but congenial, largely blames Luther himself, charging that the Reformation drove a wedge into German unity and favored particularism, which replaced the national ideal. This pessimistic crotchet of Luther weighed heavily upon him and in time developed into a fixed idea that the end of the world was nigh, with chief reference, no doubt, to the Holy Roman Empire. He communicated his apprehension to the Duke of Saxony (Feb. or Mar., 1530),⁴⁸ saying that the end was so close at hand that he would hardly be able to complete his translation of the Bible. *Denn das ist gewiss, dass wir in der heiligen Schrift nichts mehr zeitlichs Dings zu gewarten haben. Es ist alles aus und erfullet: das romisch Reich ist am Ende, der Türck auf Hohest kommen, die Pracht des Papstthums fället dahin, und knacket die Welt an allen Enden fast, als wollt sie schier brechen und fallen. Denn dass itzt dasselbige romisch Reich unter unserm Kaiser Carolo ein wenig aufsteiget und mächtiger wird, denn es lange Zeit her gewesen ist, dunkt mich, es sei die Letzte, und fur Gott eben ein Ding, als wenn ein Licht oder Strohhalm gar ausgebrannt itzt verlöschen will, so gibts eine Flamme von sich, als wollt's allerest recht anbren-*

⁴⁴ Martin Luthers *Anschauung vom Staate und der Gesellschaft*, Halle, 1901.

⁴⁵ De Wette, Vol. V., p. 407.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 548.

⁴⁷ Luther, Vol. II., p. 80. Translation, p. 100.

⁴⁸ Frankfurt-Erlangen *Briefe*, Vol. II., p. 134.

nen und eben mit demselbigen gehets aus, gleichwie die Christenheit itzt auch thut mit so hellem Evangelio. The *Tischreden* often touch the same theme. Speaking of the destruction of the Jews, Luther says:⁴⁹ *So wirt es in Germania auch gehen. Ich halt, es werde magna caligo volgen post hanc lucem, und darnach werde der jungste tag kommen.* Similarly, in a fit of pessimism, he speaks of the fall of Rome⁵⁰ and the subsequent attempts to rehabilitate the city and the Empire: *der babst flicket bis auf den heutigen tag auch doran und kan sie nicht widr zu recht bringen. Also wirt er* (i. e., *unser Herrgott*) *mit Deutschland auch thun, wirt die fromen also hin nemen und darnach mit Deutschem land ein ende machen; denn es hat die straf jhe wol vordienet, und ist noch keines auffhörens.* On another occasion he compares the Empire to Troy,⁵¹ and still another time he quotes the prophecy of Daniel.⁵²

The lack of a good ruler, too, weighed on his mind. He says⁵³ that Germany is doomed to destruction because its princes are uneducated, but that if it were under one efficient sovereign, i. e., if it had a centralized government, it would be invincible.⁵⁴ The Emperor, he claims,⁵⁵ possesses less power than an ordinary king and lacks every decent source of income. The Imperial Court of Justice, too, aroused his unfavorable comment, for he considered it an instrument of the devil. He says in *Vermahnung zum Gebet wider den Turken* (1541):⁵⁶ *Ich wil nicht heucheln, sondern die warheit sagen, Das keisericlich kamergericht Sihe, welche eine teuffels hure da regirt so es doch solt, als ein Gottlich kleinot ynn Deudschen landen, ein einiger trost sein allen denen so unrecht leiden.*

From the material above presented it appears that Luther,

⁴⁹ Luthers *Tischreden* in der Mathesischen Sammlung, Kroker, p. 291.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁵¹ Weimar ed., *Tischreden*, Vol. I., p. 452.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 637. Cf. also Vol. III., pp. 546 and 554. Cf. also Erlangen ed. Vol. 41, p. 233.

⁵³ Weimar ed., *Tischreden*, Vol. II., p. 518.

⁵⁴ Kroker, p. 414. Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

⁵⁵ Weimar ed., *Tischreden*, Vol. II., p. 404.

⁵⁶ Weimar ed., Vol. 51, p. 589. Cf. his words on the Imperial Diet, Weimar ed., Vol. 30³, p. 285.

altho an ardent patriot, and a passionate lover of his country, remained true to his virile, positive nature in that he saw all the failings of the Empire and presented them in his own original way.

Only one pamphlet of his remains to be considered, *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung* (1520),⁵⁷ a product of his earlier period, but one of his masterpieces. Here he demonstrates among other things that the Roman Empire proper has long ago disappeared from the face of the earth. When the Pope realized, continues Luther, that he was unable to exercise his power and influence over the Eastern line of rulers, he robbed them of their prerogatives and transferred the diadem of the Cæsars to the doughty, unspoiled German race, planning to crush the latter under his heel. He succeeded in this plot, soon drove the Teutons out of Italy, and left them only an empty, meaningless name. (*Der deutsche Kaiser*) *Sal Romischer keysser sein, und dennoch Rom nit ynnen haben, dartzu alletzeit ynz bapsts und der seinen mutwillen hangen und weben, das wir den namen haben, und sie das land und stedt, den sie altzeit unszer eynfeltichkeit missbraucht haben zu yhrem ubirmut und tyraney, und heissen uns tolle Deutschen, die sich effen und narren lassen wie sie wollen.* Luther urges as a remedy not the relinquishment of the Empire, but an efficient centralized regimen according to independent German ideals. A theory which well summarizes his views on the subject.

Pamphlets.

Anonymous Reformation pamphlets, spread broadcast over the country, became a daily event in the third decade of the sixteenth century. Many of them are preserved to us, yet it is safe to assume that the majority fell into rapid oblivion soon after their appearance. We naturally expect to find in them much bold and outspoken, altho at times ephemeral sentiment on the engrossing problems of the day. And so it is.

⁵⁷ Weimar ed., Vol. 6, p. 462 ff.

The Protestant cause has probably been favored by time in the number of friendly pamphlets preserved. In these works complaints against the Pope are very frequent. So for example *Ein Spruch von dem bösen Misbrauch in der heiligen Christenheit entstanden*,⁵⁸ dating probably from the year 1525, is bitter against Rome but hopes that *Karl der durchleuchtig held* will call a general council to relieve the situation, while the Protestant song of 1541 with the satirical title: *Ein Geticht darin angezeiget wird wie from Herzog Heinrich von Braunschweig und wie böse die Lutherischen sein*⁵⁹ repines at the imperial court of justice because it contains so many vain priests, altho again referring to *den fromen keiser ausserkorn*. An interesting piece of ribaldry at the expense of the Empire is the *Dialogus So Franciscus v. Sickingen vor des Himels Pforten mit Sant Peter und dem Ritter Sant Jörgen Gehalten zuvor und ehe dann er ingelassen ist worden* (1523).⁶⁰ The good knight v. Sickingen finds in the two personages that accost him very eager listeners, so he proceeds not without splendid irony and satire to give a lengthy disquisition on the makeup and nature of the Holy Roman Empire, which he has just left behind. He tells of the imperial head, not only of Christianity, but of all nations,⁶¹ and calls him a pious and sensible man, who is, however, embarrassed on all sides by selfish and grasping minor potentates. The latter, he says, consider themselves supreme and refuse to pledge allegiance to the Emperor, thus causing anarchy and confusion everywhere. To the question of St. George, *Was ist das camgericht?* he answers:⁶² *Es ist ein solch ding: wer von dem ungericht als dem fegefeuer erledigt ist, der kommt erst in die hell gar mit einander. dann ich mein warlich dass kein seel in der hell von den teufeln harter geplagt mög werden, dann wann ein armer den procurator, advocaten und dem selben rostigen haufen zu teil wirt, dann da sint so vil action, exception, re-*

⁵⁸ Schade, Vol. I., p. 37.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 52 ff.

⁶¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

plik, duplik, triplik, quadruplik, dilation, peremptoriales ferie in novis prefaxis und ordinariis, also dass kein entledigung ist: es muss blut und fleisch alles verzert werden. kumpt under hunderten einer zum endurteil, so muss er die excution und volstreckunge bei der von Ochsenstein küchenmeister süchen . . . uss solchem mangel der gerechtigkeit volgt, wo eins armen mans vermögen nit ist, disem langen und unaussdreglichen pracht usszuwarten, dass er im fürnimpt ein vede, feintschaft oder krieg.

Another pamphlet⁶³ is in the form of a parody of papal and imperial documents, chiefly of the former, and represents an edict of Lucifer: *Wir Lucifer, an di gnad gotes storcer der heiligen christenheit, guter siten und dugenden, etc.,*⁶⁴ while another gives the papal party satirical advice how best to ruin the Empire.⁶⁵ Still another⁶⁶ ridicules the paltry financial income of the Emperor and speaks of using a sum ten times as great as the latter's annual revenue for the purpose of keeping churches in order, while *Die Lutherisch Strebkatz* (1524)⁶⁷ asks for the name of a single Pope within the past four hundred years who stood by the Emperor.

Some of the best direct satire against the Empire contained in the Reformation pamphlets occurs incidentally. For instance, in the *Gesprächbüchlein von einem Bauern, Belial, Erasmo Rotterdam und Doctor Joh. Fabri* (1524) the last two are severely attacked because of their infidelity to the new Lutheran doctrines. Belial, the devil and friend of the Papists, tells the peasant that Fabri, the vicar general of the Bishop of Constance, has been appointed a privy councillor by the imperial *Statthalter* Archduke Ferdinand. The peasant answers:⁶⁸ *Ei, Belial, was sagstu? sol cyn solcher holtselfiger, keuscher Nonnentröster so bald zu grossem gewalt kommen,*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 99 ff.

⁶⁴ *Himmelsbriefe* and *Teuvelsbriefe* purporting to come from heaven or hell, satirical imitations of imperial and papal documents were frequent in the Middle Ages; cf. Clemen, Vol. III., p. 355.

⁶⁵ Schade, Vol. 2, pp. 83-84 and 89-90.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 47.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁶⁸ Clemen, Vol. I., p. 327.

das wir armen baurn uns vor iem nun so hart fürchten müssen? ei, darum stet es also wol im Römischen reich!

Heinrich v. Kettenbach, a Protestant publicist of the time, is the author of *Vergleichung des allerheiligsten Herrn und Vater des Papsts gegen Jesus* (1524). He admits⁶⁹ that at first the mutual agreement of Pope and Emperor succeeded very well, but claims that in recent times, since the Pope has amassed wealth, the Emperor has degenerated and with him his realm. *Ein Practica practiciert aus der heiligen Bibel auf viel zukünftig Jahr* (1524) by the same author, is a friendly but severe warning to the Empire, which in the past has been *blindt mit schenden augen*.⁷⁰ It continues (p. 185): *Also hör zu, du armes reich, der Rhömer und aller welt knecht und spot! dein weysen haben geben ein nerrischenn rath zu Worms auff dem reichstag vor dem armenn kynd Karolo, genant Römischer Keysrer, etc.* (*Er ist kayser, aber sein schultheysen regiern.*) The Empire had no justification, says the pamphleteer, in siding with the Pope in preference to Luther, and at the recent diet it "had porridge in its mouth and could not talk" (p. 192). The only answer, however, that the "German fool" can give to Luther's protests is (p. 193):

*Luther, lass unns Teutschen unverworn,
Wir wöln bleyben der Römer narn.
Sie haben unns das gestolen reich geben,
Auff das unser leib, gut, eer und leben
Sey nun alles jr eygen güt,
Darumb wir so vil christen blut
In streyten vergossen hon,
Von got wartten wir keyn lon.*

Rollenhagen.

Georg Rollenhagen's *Froschmeuseler* was written probably as early as 1565, altho it did not see the light of publicity until thirty years later. It is interesting not only as a modern imitation of the Homeric *Batrachomymachia* but as a valuable

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 131.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

*With the Compliments of
The Author*

picture of contemporary German conditions. As appears from the first part of the second book⁷¹ it was Rollenhagen's intention to represent by the Frogs the North Germans and by the mice the South Germans. Aside from the very apparent allusions to the Reformation, the observations, political and otherwise, of Book 2 are for the most part intentionally general, still at times it is possible to detect references to the Empire and to specific political events. Rollenhagen shows, for example, that a change of religion usually carries with it a change of government. He discusses the relative merits of every form of government, democratic, aristocratic and monarchical, and concludes that a limited monarchy is the best. A country devoid of a powerful head, he says,⁷² is doomed to failure in all its undertakings, and ill-advised wars, such as the imperial campaigns of the time surely were, leave only disaster in their wake.⁷³ Next to God's grace he praises freedom, cooperation and unity of purpose as the greatest national blessings. The lack of unity and identity of purpose in the batrachian realm, together with their concomitants, are strongly emphasized (Bk. 2, pt. 6, Chap. 1). Occasionally Rollenhagen undertakes a direct thrust at the Empire, as in one passage where he speaks of the desirability of good government:⁷⁴

*Wenn auch wenig der besten man
Des regiments sich nemen an
Und alles mit vernunft regieren,
Es muss jeder den vorteil spüren.
So lang Rom, die berümte stat,
Auf diese weis auch riet und tat,
Warn tun und lassen wol bestellt,
Sie ward mechtig der ganzen welt.*

A comparison with latter-day conditions he deems unnecessary.

⁷¹ Chap. VI. Goedeke. Vol. I., p. 216.

⁷² Goedeke. Vol. II., pp. 40-41.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

That Rollenhagen often thought in terms of the Holy Roman Empire becomes apparent from several passages ostensibly dealing with the kingdom of the frogs. It appears that the realm of the latter is nothing more than an imitation of the imperial government, for not only the supreme ruler (the frog king) and his princes, but all the estates, nay also the seven Electors, are represented there. The ruler is even compelled to pledge himself to a sort of batrachian Capitulation:⁷⁵

*Jedoch tet man nicht unbedacht,
Wenn man ein solche ordnung macht,
Das der könig auf seinem eid,
Wenn er annem die obrigkeit,
Zusagen müst, das ganze reich,
Hohen und niedrigen stand zugleich,
Frei zu lassen und zu beschützen
Wider aller partien trützen
Bei der heiligen religion,
Bei recht und gerechtigkeit fron.*

An imperial election conducted by the seven Electors is parodied, too. The dignified heptad convenes and in a stormy session tries to choose a frog king, but in vain, for an agreement is found to be impossible:⁷⁶

*Also wankt alles hin und her
Wie ein schiflein im weiten mer,
Das ledig on ein herren schwimt,
Das wassr und wind zum spiel aufnimmt.*

The sequel, finally, the speech of the stork, is in part at least a take-off on the speeches and documents of the German Emperor.

Fischart.

Johann Fischart is one of the most interesting figures of his time, a thorough patriot, honest in his hatred and contempt for the enemies of his country, the French and Span-

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

iards, but like his predecessors, Brant, Sachs, Hutten, Luther and Rollenhagen, never blinded to shortcomings at home. With enthusiasm he champions the greatness of his fatherland as well as political and religious freedom, but hates with all the virility of his nature the Roman Catholic Church. His *Eikones cum brevissimis descriptionibus. . . . Bildnüssen oder Contrafacturen der XII Ersten Alten Teutschen König und Fürsten* appeared separately in 1573,⁷⁷ and a second time in 1581, revised and augmented, as a supplement to the *Emblematum Tyrocinia* of Mathias Holtzwart. In this work there are a cut entitled *Germania domitrix gentium*,⁷⁸ an introductory poem *Ernstliche Ermanung an die lieben Teutschen* (pp. 387-389) and some closing verses *Erklärung beyder hic fürgemalter Teutscher Tugenden*. The former poem is a complaint against the decay of German glory and virtues. Germania, says the author, should be provided with a magpie instead of an eagle, a hobby-horse instead of a sceptre,⁷⁹ and a nursery ball instead of a globe. What boots it, he says, to praise one's glorious ancestors if one remains inactive oneself:

*Also was ist dir für eyn Ehr,
Wann rühmst die Alten Teutschen sehr,
Wie sie für jhre Freiheyt stritten
Und keynen bösen Nachbarn bitten
Und du achtst nicht der Freiheyt dein,
Kanst kaum inn deim Land sicher sein,
Last dir dein Nachbarn sein Pferd binden,
An deinen Zaun fornen und hindern!*

The second poem, the *Erklärung*, lauds steadfastness and fidelity as prime factors essential to Germany's unity and greatness. Fischart realizes, furthermore, that inner disruption

⁷⁷ Hauffen, Vol. I., p. lxv.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁷⁹ It is interesting to note that two hundred years later Hölderlin in a poem *An die Deutschen*, D. N. L., 135², p. 443, expressed the same idea:

*Spottet ja nicht des Kinds, wenn es mit Peitsch' und Sporn,
Auf dem Rosse von Holz, mutig und gross sich dünkt.
Denn, ihr Deutschen, auch ihr seid
Tatenarm und gedankenvoll.*

and discord were one of the chief troubles of the land; his verses to the *Bildnuss des Wohlgeborenen Herrn Herrn Lazarus von Schwendi*,⁸⁰ in which he censures severely all Christians for their lack of concordant spirit, illustrate this view.

On one occasion, in the *Gargantua*, Fischart speaks to his own books and proudly points to the fact that even the Emperor reveres them, since they act as a check upon his conduct.⁸¹ The oft-quoted stanza from the eighth chapter of the *Gargantua*:⁸²

*Wolauff mit reichem schalle,
Ich weiss mir ein Gesellschaft gut,
gefallt mir vor anderen alle,
sie trägt ein freien Mut,
Sie hat gar kleine sorgen,
wol umb das Römisch Reich,
es sterb heut oder morgen,
so gilt es jnen gleich.*

mentioned by most of the Faust commentators in connection with the song of Frosch and Brander's retort in *Auerbachs Keller*, is one of the many interludes in the *Gargantua* taken over from earlier sources. It was written by Jörg Busch of Nuremberg and appeared for the first time in 1551.⁸³ In connection with Goethe more will be said of it. That there were other versions of the song is shown by the *Trinklied* (1500-1550) in the *Wunderhorn*, Vol. II., p. 230, the fourth strophe of which reads:

*Wir han gar kleine Sorgen
Wohl um das römisch Reich,
Es sterb heut oder morgen,
Das gilt uns alles gleich;
Und ging es auch in Stücke,
Wenn nur das Heu geräth,
Daraus drehn wir ein Stricke,
Der es zusammen näht.*

⁸⁰ Cf. Richard Siegemund in *Zeitschrift f. d. deut. Unterricht*, x., 233 ff.

⁸¹ Alsleben, p. 444.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁸³ For complete data vid. C. A. Williams *Zur Liederpoesie in Fischarts Gargantua*, p. 56.

Folksong and Miscellanea.

Emperor Charles V. was variously judged by his contemporaries. Frequently he was attacked with great severity for his efforts against German civil and religious freedom. Rumors of every description were circulated by Protestants, for example that the Emperor hired cutthroats and incendiaries who pillaged Protestant lands;⁸⁴ books, circulars and pamphlets were spread broadcast purporting to be ancient prophecies telling of the wicked Charles V. and the condition of Germany in 1546-48. Some pamphlets show extreme hate toward him, but deep, sincere love for the fatherland; poems absolutely favorable to him are less frequent.⁸⁵ A lampoon of 1542 on the Empire, all the princes, estates, etc.,⁸⁶ quotes a relevant biblical motto for each. Under *Römischer Kaiser* it states: *Ein jedes Reich, so es selbst mit sich uneins wird, das wird wüste. Ich bin nicht gekommen, Friede zu senden, sondern das Schwert*, while to *Römisches Reich* is affixed: *Sie haben Mäuler und reden nicht, Ohren und hören nicht, Augen und sehen nicht, Nasen und riechen nicht; sie haben Hände und greifen nicht, Füsse und wandern nicht.* In a song that appeared in the anti-imperial Magdeburg toward the middle of the sixteenth century⁸⁷ Charles V. and "his Spaniards," i. e., his Spanish troops, are ridiculed. Strophe 3:

*Zü Magdenburg auf der brucken
da ligen drei hündelein
si heulen alle morgen
kain Spanier lassen si ein.*

Further (Str. 5):

*Zü Magdenburg auf der maure
da ligt ein eisener man, (i. e., Otto the Great)
will in der kaiser gewinnen
sein Spanier müssen dran.*

⁸⁴ Johannes Voigt: *Ueber Pasquille, Spottlieder u. Schmähsschriften*, etc., p. 484.

⁸⁵ Cf. e. g., Liliencron, Vol. III., Nos. 309-312.

⁸⁶ Voigt, p. 514 ff.

⁸⁷ Liliencron, Vol. IV., p. 516; Uhland, p. 552.

And finally (Str. 7) :

*Zü Magdenburg in der werden statt
da seind der büxen vil,
si trauren alle morgen
dass der kaiser nit kommen will.*

More general references to the Emperor, unfavorable in their purport, are also very frequent. At times they take the form of satirical nursery rhymes:⁸⁸

*Es geht ein Butzemann im Reich herum, Didum, Didum,
Bidi, Bidi, Bum!
Der Kaiser schlägt die Trumm
Mit Händen und mit Füssen,
Mit Sabeln und mit Spießen!
Didum, didum, didum!*

or again:⁸⁹

*Zipperle pípperle bump,
Der Kaiser ist e Lump,
Er reitet über Feld
Und bringt e Sack voll Geld.*

The *Sack voll Geld*, thinks Hildebrand (sub. *Kaiser* in Grimm's Wb.), refers to money that the Emperor is supposed to have borrowed. A satirical proverb: *er hat wol was, wenn der arme kaiscr nur was hätte* is quoted by Simrock.⁹⁰ An examination of the longer, more ambitious historical songs of the time, as they appear in the *Wunderhorn*, in Uhland or in Liliencron, again discloses results similar to those revealed in the previous chapter. As far as sheer bulkiness is concerned, they are extremely promising, but upon close scrutiny reveal only a minimum of material of significant content. Here and there we find a thrust at the Empire, as for example in *Ein Lied von*

⁸⁸ Wolffs *Sammlung histor. Volkslieder*, p. 185.

⁸⁹ E. Meier *Deutsche Kinderreime und Kinderspiele aus Schwaben*, p. 39.

⁹⁰ *Deutsche Sprichwörter*, No. 5363. For a similar proverb, *Das Reich ist uneinig*, referring to disagreements of any kind between individuals or parties, cf. *ibid.*, No. 8319.

Muhlhausen und der Eidgenossenschaft, Liliencron III., 162 ff., of 1515, which warns the Swiss to preserve their unity, for (Str. 20) :

*Uncinigkeit all reich zerstört,
kan aber keins nicht machen.*

or in the song *Von Wullenwever und den regierenden Bürgern zu Lübeck* (1534), Liliencron IV., 100 ff., which depicts the Protestant rebellion led by the Hamburg merchant Jörgen Wullenwever. Strophe 4 describes how a mandate of the Emperor was received :

*des keisers torn men fruchte,
cim rad daran misdachte;
Hans Katte nam dat vor spodd:
de keiser wer kein god.*

The last line became the watchword of the rebellion (Str. 5).

Forster.

Georg Forster, a friend of Luther, wrote his popular *Frische Deutsche Liedlein* toward the middle of the century. He, too, is on the whole a friend of the Empire, but is well aware of its critical condition. He says:⁹¹

*Wer ohren hat hör wic es Gåt
wenn ein reych soll zerfallen!
Erstlich das haubt wirt gar beraubt
Gott widerstrebt in allen
Sein wort es hast in wollust rast
lebt nach scim wil auff erden
darumb spricht Got "bin ich dein spot
zu schanden must auch werden!"*

The Turkish danger also was apparent to him, and in a lively *Türkenlied* (p. 164 ff.) of unusual freshness he urges the Empire to arouse itself from its somnolence.

⁹¹ Neudrucke, Vols. 203-206, pp. 184-185.

CHAPTER IV

THE CENTURY OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

One event of paramount importance overshadows the whole seventeenth century, to wit, the Thirty Years' War. In science, in literature, in art, in every phase of human activity its baleful, retarding influence asserts itself. After the successful struggle led by Luther against the Catholic Italian Church and the ever strengthening resistance against the Turkish onslaughts had fully prepared the country for development along nationalistic, patriotic lines, the terrible cataclysm took place. What it did not destroy utterly it suppressed or left behind in mutilated, stunted form. This sad residuum, then, we shall examine for the purpose of finding material pertinent to our subject. That such matter should have been plentiful in an age in which political conditions were uppermost in the minds of men is quite apparent.

To be sure, even before the era of the Thirty Years' War national feeling, stifled by religious and political differences, was at its lowest ebb in Germany.¹ The popular writers as a rule had only a vague, general knowledge of German history and dwelt on hazy conceptions of an erstwhile German world dominion and the like.² Religious faith assumed almost a dominating rôle in the patriotism of the time; the struggle for Protestantism, which swept with it the greater part of the country, became practically synonymous with the struggle for patriotism.³ A certain consciousness of the oneness, the solidarity of the Empire, moreover, which had always remained alive throughout the ages, was obliterated by the Thirty Years'

¹ Behrens, *Deutsches Ehr- und Nationalgefühl*, p. 16.

² Ditfurth, *Die historisch-politischen Volkslieder d. 30jährigen Krieges*, p. 75.

³ For a good discussion of the patriotism of the time vid. Wels, *Die patriotischen Strömungen in der deut. Literatur des 30jährigen Krieges*.

War, when brother fought against brother, and gave way largely to party feeling. But in spite of these unfortunate circumstances a general feeling of hatred and distrust of the French remained ever present in the popular mind,⁴ while the friendship for Sweden, too, died out soon after the death of Gustavus Adolphus.⁵ Fear and loathing of the Turks, of course, was as prevalent as ever. The learned literature of the time, laboring as it did under the influence of Humanism and late Stoic Eclecticism, reveals a certain studied apathy toward all things mundane, including the native land. Consequently this branch of letters is notably deficient in sincerity and warmth, a shortcoming which, combined with its non-committal timorousness, its fear and reluctance in expressing frank opinions, detracts from its general value and precludes the possibility of effective satire.

The importance and significance of the seventeenth century publicists for our topic were mentioned in the first chapter. Altho strictly speaking their works cannot be classed in the category of literature, they are extremely valuable as barometers of general opinion and as factors in shaping the public as well as the literary mind. Usually they were in advance of their time. The conception of the Emperor, for example, as possessed of unlimited world power, was quite general among the uninitiated until the eighteenth century. Still Conring questioned it as early as 1643 in his *De Germanorum Imperio romano liber unus*.⁶

Hippolithus a Lapide.

Four years later, in 1647, a lengthy disquisition entitled *Dissertatio de ratione status in Imperio Nostro Romano-Germanico*⁷ appeared under the pseudonymous authorship of a

⁴ H. Hitzigrath, *Die Publicistik des Prager Friedens*, p. 115; also Opel-Cohn, *Der 30jährige Krieg. Eine Sammlung v. histor. Gedichten u. Prosadarstellungen*, p. 22.

⁵ Hitzigrath, p. 108. Ditfurth, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

⁶ Vid. Himly, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁷ *Dissertatio de ratione status in Imperio Nostro Romano-Germanico, etc. Autore Hippolitho a Lapide, Freistadii, Anno 1647.* 583 pp.

certain Hippolithus a Lapide, who turned out to be a jurist by the name of Chemnitz and a Swede by birth. The book makes interesting reading even today because of its bold, iconoclastic proposals in regard to the imperial government. Right at the outset, in the preface to the reader, the author speaks of *funes-tam et cadaverosam hodiernae Germaniae nostrae faciem* and of the inexorable fate which holds men and empires in its grip. He is furthermore especially bitter against the antiquated judicial machinery, obsolescent statutes, and the discrepancy and diversity of the imperial legal code. In the main body of his work (p. 2) he assures his readers that no vain desire to satisfy a scholastic crotchet tempted him to write, but actual concern for the country. With contempt he disregards the traditional imperial glories and considers actual conditions and prospects. He treats the German constitution, such as it was, as a native growth and rejects all theories of imperial absolutism as absurd. The Emperor's power, he charges, had always been a menace to the land and in his own day it had become more so, altho (p. 290): *Nihil fere habet (imperator) nisi quod inane nomen ejus, et titulus, omnibus Imperii decretis praefigatur.*⁸ He calls the Emperors harpies with rapacious talons (p. 426) and characterizes all their promises as empty verbiage, which will be realized only at the advent of the Greek calends (p. 352). The comparison (pp. 398-399) which he draws between the ancient Roman Empire of Cæsar and the Empire of his own day is very apt. Cæsar, he says, had all the power of an Emperor, but lacked the title; the latter-day Emperors possess only the name, for, in the words of Aeneas Sylvius,⁹ the princes obey him only in so far as it pleases them, which is usually very little. The gravamen of the author's accusation, however, is the fact that the Hapsburg house had usurped too much power and had weakened the Empire for selfish motives. Consequently he urges, Part III.,

⁸ Speaking of the imperial insignia he says, p. 395: *Simulacra vero Majestatis ea dicuntur, quae magnam quidem speciem præ se ferunt, ac inanis umbra, ut Plinius junior loquitur, et sine potestate nomen sunt; parumque Imperii ac potestatis, in se, revera continent.* Cf. Appendix A.

⁹ *Germ.*, c. 43.

Chap. 2, the extirpation of the Austrian line, the *familia Germaniae nostrae fatalis* (p. 520). That he was after all a staunch patriot, a friend of the imperial idea in its best expression, and merely a hater of Hapsburgian absolutism and greed, is proved by the following quotation (p. 538) : *Et quod Alexander Magnus ait, sicut in corporibus aegris, nihil quod noceturum est, Medici relinquunt: Sic nos, quicquid obstat Imperio nostro (cuius fundamentum Libertas, non unius arbitrium est) recidamus.*

v. Pufendorf.

The other epoch-making publicist of the time, Samuel von Pufendorf, or as he calls himself in his famous *De Statu Imperii Germanici* (1667),¹⁰ Severinus de Monzambano, ostensibly an Italian, is likewise an iconoclast. In his sober, objective, matter-of-fact method, his independence of authorities and sources, and in his originality, he far surpasses Chemnitz. His work, the *De Statu*, is of additional importance because he proves that the Empire of his day could not be classified according to Aristotle's scheme and further because he exposes mercilessly the rottenness of the government, the systematic decay caused by the selfishness and apathy of the imperial estates. He shows real patriotic sorrow over the ruin of the once powerful Empire and with virile indignation attacks the egotistic un-German policy of the Austrian rulers, the ecclesiastical principalities in the midst of Germany, the petty particularistic spirit throughout the Empire, and the scholastic, Aristotelian theories of many of the contemporary publicists and political writers. Boldly he refutes the latter with the statement that the Empire is not a perfect organization, that it suffers from irremediable ills and that its constitution is a monstrosity.¹¹

In the introductory letter to his fictitious friend Laelius he sarcastically indicates that the publicists of the time were

¹⁰ Severinus de Monzambano, *De Statu Imperii Germanici*, ed. Fritz Salomon, Weimar, 1910.

¹¹ He calls the Empire, p. 126: *irregularare aliquod corpus et monstrum simile*; it approaches nearest a federation of states, he says.

merely pedantic compilers, whose works are quite useless to the serious student. Hence he disregards them and visits the diet of Ratisbon, where he has a good opportunity of observing at first hand the incohesiveness of the Empire (p. 30). He is eager to prove (pp. 43-45) that the imperial coronation of Charles the Great was not actually a revival of the West Roman Empire; Charles the Great he calls of Germanic or Frankish origin altho the Emperor was a resident of Francogallia (p. 38). Practical-minded as he is, he considers only realities and ignores ideals, such as the theoretical union of Germany and Italy. The inaccuracy and contradiction involved in the title of the Emperor arouse his keen power of ridicule (p. 46): *Retinent tamen receptum semel vocabulum Reges Germaniae, utut dudum et coronationem Romanam omiserint et vix quidquam ex antiquae illius advocatiae iuribus usurpaverint, quia Principibus solempne est, re citius quam titulo cedere.*

There are two editions of Pufendorf's work. The earlier is sharp and severe against the House of Hapsburg, the later, the posthumous redaction, is much milder in this respect. Naturally the original version is the more interesting of the two and is the basis of the present discussion. Similarly to Chemnitz Pufendorf decries the greedy methods of the Austrian Emperors and attacks their luxuriant *Hausmacht*. He is also bitter against the secular potentates for their warlike spirit (pp. 60-61) and their independence of the Emperor (p. 71), and speaks with sarcasm of the imperial knights, who draw large incomes for doing nothing (p. 65). In fact, he asserts that one of the greatest weaknesses of the Empire is the inordinate power of the nominally dependent princes (pp. 74-75). In regard to the vexing dilatoriness of the imperial diet in its action on the *Wahlcapitulation* he waxes satirical (p. 89). Since some people, he says, might ask what so many deputies at the diet had accomplished in times of peace besides drinking wine, this insoluble, labyrinthine puzzle, the capitulation, was devised in order to furnish useful material for fruitless discussion! He also jokes in a good-natured way over the fact that expired fiefs accrue to the imperial treasury, a case

in which the country for once offers its Emperors something more than a mere title (p. 92). The Imperial High Court of Justice at Speyer is not left unscathed, either.¹² The last section of his work, finally, is taken up with a refutation of many of the proposals of Chemnitz to improve general conditions, as well as with a very able catalogue of the defects and weaknesses of the imperial government.

Theobald Hock.

Like many writers of the time Theobald Hock, the author of the *Schoenes Blumenfeld*, was a *laudator temporis acti*, an admirer of those supposititious times that never existed. To some extent, of course, this poetic weakness is inbred in man; however, when it becomes too frequent and too obtrusive in any age, there is always reason to suspect that it was consciously impressed into use as a literary device. This seems to have been the case with Hock. He speaks, for example, of the mythical first king of Germany, Tuitschon¹³ in whose regime justice was administered impartially and promptly, wedlock was considered sacred, dresses were simple and modest, houses were built for use and not for ostentation, and usury and perjury were unknown. "Compare this with conditions in the present Empire!" he exclaims. Chapter 33 of his *Floral Field* complains of the superabundance of imperial councillors who are of no use, and puns on the words *raten*, *erraten* and *verraten* (p. 49). The endless procrastination, venality and sophistry of the courts is the subject of the following chapter, No. 34 (pp. 50-52), while Chapter 39 (p. 58) mourns over the fact that only money and influence win recognition, whereas efficiency is allowed to go begging. Of what avail, asks Hock, are laws and regulations if no one obeys them? (p. 59).

¹² He quotes the following pun and says further, p. 107: *Vulgo lites Spirae dicuntur spirare sed numquam expirare; cuius rei causa est: tam immensae ambages processus, tam causarum multitudo et paucitas assessorum, sed praeprimis, quia deficit ut plurimum facultas exequendi sententias.*

¹³ *Von des Tuitschon Policy*, Chap. 87, Koch ed., p. 125 ff.

v. Dohna.

Satire such as is quoted above from Theobald Hock, which deals with general customs, as for example habits of dress, is a favorite genre in the seventeenth century. Usually it goes under the name of satire *à la mode* and is intimately related, too, to the many learned societies of the time, which advocated purer speech. On the whole it may be called social in its restrictions, altho it occasionally touches upon the miseries of the war; only in rare instances does it deal at all with politics. One notable example of an exceptional case of the latter kind is the poem of Abraham v. Dohna entitled *Historische Reimen von dem ungereimten Reichstag Anno 1613*.¹⁴ At the diet in question, which met at Regensburg, the election of Ferdinand II. to the office of Roman King was fruitlessly debated under the leadership of Bishop Khlesl, but the usual petty quarrels and insurmountable differences made an agreement impossible.¹⁵ Dohna, a confirmed Protestant from East Prussia, was present at the diet and described his experiences first in ambassadorial letters, then in his satirical poem written in a free Alexandrine measure. The work is very caustic in its tone and impugns the mutual distrust of the two religious factions and the vain, ineffectual deliberations of the princes, prelates, ambassadors, and small fry.

Official Documents.

That Dohna had good reason to scoff at the tactics of the imperial legislature is very evident. As we shall see, this subject as well as the dilatory courts loomed large in literature long before Goethe's day. And turning again to the sources, i. e., the imperial documents themselves, we find even there indications of actual conditions. Dumont-Rousset, for example, reports¹⁶ a most childish dispute which took place in the Diet of Deputation of 1681 at Frankfurt in regard to a petty ques-

¹⁴ Anton Chroust, *Dohna, s. Leben u. s. Gedicht auf d. Reichstag v. 1613.*

¹⁵ Cf. Chroust, *Der Reichstag v. 1613.*

¹⁶ *Ceremonial of the Imperial Court—Dumont Suppl.*, Vol. IV., p. 742.

iton of the seating order of some ambassadors and deputies.¹⁷ Patriots, says Dumont, complained relative to the incident that the Empire had never been worse off, while other less interested spectators made all sorts of pertinent jests. The cumbersome judicial proceedings of the time are also betrayed by an official document, viz., an agreement between Margrave Albrecht the younger of Brandenburg and the city of Nuremberg, according to which the latter agreed to pay the Margrave 200,000 *Reichstaler* on condition that hereafter he keep the peace. The third article of the document reads:¹⁸ *Zum dritten nachdem sich zwischen dem löblichen Haus Brandenburg dieser Landes-Art und gemeiner Stadt Nürnberg mancherley Nachbarlicher Irrung und Spenne in- und ausserhalb Rechtens halten sollen bemelte Spenne und Irrungen alle und jede wie die bis auf heutigen Tag herkommen unerörtert hangen und genannt werden keine ausgenommen hiemit von wegen beyder unser gnädiger Herren Marggraff Albrechten und Marggraff George Friedrichen und der Stadt Nürnberg von dem langwirigen rechtlichen Austrag genommen abgeschafft und zu gütlicher Verhöre und Handlung . . . hiemit geschoben und gestellet seyn.* It furnishes only one example in many of how litigants were practically forced to settle their difficulties among themselves because of the inefficiency of the imperial courts.

Weckherlin.

Georg Rodolf Weckherlin, who lived during the first half of the seventeenth century and who is sometimes considered a forerunner of Opitz, spent much of his time in England, but never lost touch with his native land. In 1633, after the death of Gustavus Adolphus, he wrote a poem in praise of the deceased king for his services to Germany.¹⁹ Several patriotic poems, too, came from his pen; one of them, *An das Teutschland*,²⁰ contains an earnest admonition to the country to break

¹⁷ Cf. also *ibid.*, Vol. V., p. 758.

¹⁸ Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, Vol. IV., pt. 3, p. 37.

¹⁹ Goedeke. *Gedichte v. G. R. Weckherlin*, p. 230.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

its cruel fetters, to take new courage, and to withstand the forces that tend against freedom. Another work of Weckherlin, *An Herren Theodor de Mayerne*,²¹ is addressed to the then noted personal physician of Henry IV. of France, who later became a favorite of James I. of England. It is assigned by Goedeke to the early part of the Thirty Years' War, before the death of James I. (1625). Here Weckherlin compares the body of the Empire to a human organism. In both, he asserts, it is possible to see how idleness breeds shame, how shame generates discord, how discord causes revolt, how the latter in turn brings on infirmity and finally death. But if, on the other hand, the evil influences are thru God's grace overcome by good counsel, by the help of head and hand, health, peace and joy will soon return to a land as well as to a human body. Continuing he says:

*Ach näm das teutsche reich, das jetzt in seinem blut
ganz zaghhaft, trostlos, schwach mit des tod's band umfangen,
Mayerne, deinen rat allein getreu, weis, gut;
So solt es nicht allein trost, hilf und heil empfangen,
sondern sein herz, hand, hirn, von zaghheit, schwachheit, wut
gefreit, solten noch unsterblichkeit erlangen.*

v. Logau.

Friedrich v. Logau, the prolific epigrammatist of the period, took a very similar attitude. By nature he was extremely patriotic, but unfortunately he lived in an era when this sentiment could be expressed only by sighs and complaints and by rueful retrospection. Consequently he often bemoans the hard times in contradistinction to the better days gone by,²² changes *Teutschland* into *Scheuland*²³ and calls it a repository for the dregs of all nations,²⁴ a victim of the plundering sol-

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

²² Gustav Eitner, *Friedrichs v. Logau Sämmtliche Sinngedichte*, Bibl. Lit. Ver. Stuttg., 113, No. I., 1, 71, p. 25; also No. I., 1, 90, p. 30.

²³ *Ibid.*, No. I., 3, 52, p. 67.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, No. I., 6, 18, p. 121.

dairy,²⁵ an inebriate²⁶ and a paradise for plunderers.²⁷ He attacks the Emperor for taking unfair advantage of the peasantry in time of war²⁸ and doubts whether the Peace of Westphalia will be as longevel as the war which it concluded.²⁹ All other nations, he says, acted as grave-diggers for Germany³⁰ and are still eagerly engaged in preventing new spirits of life from entering the defunct body, lest it arise in its wrath and inhume them.

Moscherosch.

The *Gesichte Philanders v. Sittewald* of Moscherosch present a good example of the so-called *à la mode* satire, for they are directed mainly against the social evils of the day. But here again, as in the case of Logau, Weckherlin and Hock, we have an admixture of social and political satire. It appears, indeed, that no writer of the time, no matter what may have been his interests, his hopes and his ideals, could avoid touching upon political conditions. We may turn to such extremes as the Jesuit priest Jacob Balde³¹ and the philologist Justus Georg Schottelius,³² and still we meet essentially the same thought. In the work of Moscherosch just mentioned we find several allusions, more or less direct, to contemporary conditions in the Empire. In the first section of the second part, for instance,³³ there is a prophecy to the effect that the day is approaching on which the once glorious Empire will perish and citizen will struggle against citizen, brother against brother. Gallic language and customs will win the day; the country will come under the foreign yoke. Only one hope remains, the

²⁵ *Ibid.*, No. I., 7, 11, p. 140.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, No. I., 7, 16, p. 141.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, No. I., 7, 25, p. 143.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, No. I., 8, 41, p. 170.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, No. II., 5, 6, p. 313.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 608. Cf. also p. 206.

³¹ In his *Silvae Lyricae*, IV., 3, he begs the pardon of Charles the Great because the Empire has sunk so low.

³² In his *Horrendum Bellum Grammaticale Teutonum antiquissimorum*, p. 59, he preaches political unity, and p. 47 curses all who strive against that ideal.

³³ D. N. L., 32, p. 168.

advent of some heroic genius who can restore Germanic manners and usages to the people. Further on in the novel³⁴ Moscherosch tells the story of the young crown prince of Wassgau who receives from his dying father a golden apple with instructions to travel around the world for the purpose of discovering the biggest fool and presenting him with the apple. The son proceeds to carry out the behests of his father. He discovers that terrible, hopeless conditions prevail at the many imperial and royal courts to which he comes, that usually the rulers and nobles are no better off than the meanest lackeys, that they are harsh and unjust and that corruption and envy flourish in exuberance. But one land particularly arouses his attention.³⁵ "Donkeys rode on horses, sows on woodpeckers. It was a topsyturvy realm, indeed, more like unto a painting than a country. And as the young sire enquired about the king, they answered that they had quite forgotten who he was." The sovereign, it turns out, had been a reckless gambler and had lost his land by a single stroke of misfortune. The prince considers him a promising candidate, indeed, for the golden apple, but fails to find him.³⁶ Well may Moscherosch have had contemporary conditions in mind when he wrote his precious bit of satire, for Germany, too, was a subverted Empire frequently victimized by reckless rulers. It is a fact, moreover, as Biedermann shows,³⁷ that many subjects of the Emperor were not even aware of his existence.

Schlüsselroman.

Thruout this era the so-called *Schlüsselroman*, the type which represents the ideal state, the Utopia, became popular not only in Germany but also in England and France. In truth, Germany was first subjected to its influence by translations, as for example of John Barclay's Latin *Argenis* by Opitz

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 185 ff.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³⁶ The motif of the search for a fool or fools was popular in the seventeenth century. Cf. Christian Weise's *Die drei ärgsten Erznarren*, Braune, Ndr. 12.

³⁷ *Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 2, Pt. 1, p. 35 et passim.

(1626). Models such as Plato, Campanella and More were frequently used. The scene of these novels is always laid in some remote land, but the tendency is ever present in more or less conspicuous form to point to contemporary conditions at home.³⁸ In order to make this clear the authors occasionally published even a key or explanation of their work. Wieland's excursus on his *Abderiten* is a conspicuous example.

Opitz.

Of the so-called learned poets, mentioned above, Opitz is probably the most noted. Gryphius, the dramatist, too, is still known at least by name. Siegmund v. Birken and Johannes Rist, however, are no longer familiar to the average reader. As was previously stated, one seeks in vain in the works of these authors frequent and bold references to politics. To be sure, Opitz wrote his *Trostgedichte in Widerwertigkeit dess Krieges*, but his statements are usually general. In the second book, for example, he speaks of the transitoriness of things mundane³⁹ and asks what has become of splendid Rome, the goddess of all empires, the head of the whole world. All that remains of it, he answers, is carrion. Again in the fourth book⁴⁰ he complains rather sarcastically of conditions in Germany :

wir sind ja teutsch geboren,
Ein Volck, das nimmermehr sein Hertze hat verloren,
Dass vor der Zeit so viel den Kürtzern hat gejagt,
Das nach der Römer Macht zum minsten nicht gefragt,
Von dem viel Keyser auch den Frieden musten häuffen,
Das noch auff diesen Tag ihr keiner an darff greiffen,
Als wenn es ohngefähr fällt in sein eygnes Haar,
Wie Carlen vor der Zeit dem Fünfftten wissend war.

³⁸ Christian Weise's *Die drei Hauptverderber*, for example, represents in the manner of the *Gesichte* of Moscherosch the plans of the Wendish king Mistevoi to destroy the German Empire by instigating religious quarrels and by taking advantage of the indifference and the social evils of the time.

³⁹D. N. L. 27, p. 287.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 315.

v. Birken and Rist.

Siegmund v. Birken, it appears, was very optimistic about the future of Germany, for in two songs *Der Friede* and *Lied*,⁴¹ written after the close of the Thirty Years' War, he prophesies eternal peace for the country now that the terrible slaughter is over. Germany has long enough been the victim of "base dissension," he says. Rist is somewhat more outspoken than his two contemporaries Opitz and v. Birken. Altho in the hymeneal song to his friend Christian Feustel⁴² he praises the quietistic life and ridicules those who are concerned with politics and current events, he himself wrote *Germania's Klaglied*,⁴³ a soliloquy in the nature of Hans Sachs' dialogue *Ein clagred Deutschlands und gesprech mit dem getrewen Eckhart*. Germania bemoans her wretched lot; even her own children have turned against her, while Spaniards, Turks, French, Goths and Croatians are tearing her to pieces and mocking her besides (Str. 10). In his day Rist was also well known as a dramatist. Two of his dramatic works, or *Singspiele*, *Das friederwünschende Deutschland* (1647) and *Das friedejauchzende Deutschland* (1653) are preserved. In the former⁴⁴ the chosen Germanic heroes King Ehrenfest (Ariovistus), Claudius Civilis, and the dukes Hermann and Witekind are conducted to earth by Mercury in order that they may be convinced that ancient Germany has developed into a most magnificent and splendid empire. But the party is sadly disappointed, for it finds neither magnificence nor splendor, nothing save the misery of Queen Deutschland, who has been deceived, maltreated and fettered by Don Antonio, Monsieur Gaston, Signoro Bartholomeo and Herr Karel, Spaniard, Frenchman, Italian and Swede respectively. The surgeon Ratio status, representing the glibly deceptive politics of the time, will not cure her wounds, but Love and Justice intercede for her with

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 366-367.

⁴² *Johann Risten Poetischer Schauplatz*, Hamburg, 1646, p. 120 ff.

⁴³ Müllers Bibliothek deutscher Dichter d. 17. Jahrhunderts, Vol. 8, pp. 60-65.

⁴⁴ Ed. H. M. Schletterer, Augsburg, 1864; described in Vogt u. Koch, II., pp. 23-24.

God, begging the latter to send back to her Peace and Hope. The play, says Max Koch,⁴⁵ reminds one of Frischlin's *Julius redivivus*, written a century earlier, with the significant difference that in the latter German conditions are found satisfactory by the celestial visitors, while in the former we are dealing with a type of satire.

Gryphius.

Gryphius, the greatest dramatist of the time, usually avoids contemporary politics, but in the opening monologue of *Leo Armenius* the imperial general Michael Balbus, a conspirator against the Eastern Emperor, tells his fellow conspirators of conditions in the Eastern Roman Empire, of the discord of the princes, the ecclesiastical quarrels and the treachery of the council,⁴⁶ all of which Gryphius may well have written with a view to conditions prevailing in his own native land.

Folksong.

More freedom in mode of expression and a note of sincere frankness can be detected in the popular songs of the time, altho as in the case of the previous centuries the major part of the material is pro-imperialistic. The Thirty Years' War, of course, overshadows all other events and becomes practically the exclusive subject treated. The poem *Wunderbarlich Gespräch unterschiedlicher Person*⁴⁷ of 1631 is in the form of a deliberation held by prelates and princes on how to receive the peace plans of Gustavus Adolphus and to bring about an honorable peace. The *Secretarius* summons the councillors; the Emperor, he says (Str. 6), who has issued the call is somewhat confused:

*Wie einer, ders heisst spielen,
Ein Anderer derwilen
Macht unverhofft Trumpf aus!*

⁴⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁶ H. Palm, *Trauerspiele. Bibl. d. Lit. Ver. Stuttg.*, 162, p. 19.

⁴⁷ Ditfurth, *Die historisch-politischen Volkslieder d. 30jährigen Krieges*, No. 86, p. 224 ff.

The councillor, who is addressed, however, advises the Emperor to rely on his Jesuits and Spanish favorites, who are responsible for the quandary in which he finds himself. Finally, after the assemblage has deliberated at length but to no avail, Nelli Narr breaks in impatiently (Str. 46) and warns all those present that they are talking themselves into idiocy. In *Ein new Gespräch zwischen St. Petro und Carolo Magno im Himmel über die itsigen Zeitlauffe*, 1631,⁴⁸ another Protestant song, Charles the Great, in heaven, wonders what has become of his Empire, for lawlessness and disorder seem to prevail where once law and order were observed. St. Peter volunteers an explanation. The contending parties, he says, pretend to be quarrelling about religion, whereas in reality the rapaciousness and contentiousness of the wicked Pope and his clergy are responsible for the trouble. The whole land is a dismal waste; everything is at the mercy of the soldiery. Upon hearing this, Charles the Great is furious and demands that St. Peter tell him what has become of the Emperor. The answer is satirical: An Emperor? Why, how could he, a mere papal domestic, redress wrongs? Surely he can fawn upon the Jesuits, torture their opponents and trample on old privileges promised by writ, but nothing more:

*Ein Irrer, der sein Eingeweide
Zerwühlet sich mit eigner Hand,
Hinschlachtet seine Freund als Feinde:
Also ist Kaiser Ferdinand.*

Peter guarantees that an avenger in the form of Gustavus Adolphus will be sent. Another song entitled *Ein bittlich Gesang an Keyser Ferdinandum*⁴⁹ is of the same tenor. The anti-Swedish *Schwedisches Quodlibet*⁵⁰ makes Sweden responsible for the terrible ravages of war and in its half-German, half-Latin diction serio-comically charges (Str. 28):

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 90, p. 237 ff.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 26, p. 60.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 120, p. 299 ff.

*Es gilt ihm eben gleich
 Quibus cnervet artibus
 Das heilig Römisch Reich.*

Hartmann's collection of folksongs⁵¹ also contains several poems of the era that are unfavorable to the Empire. A good example is a fragmentary work of 1631, addressed to the Emperor, with the refrain *Warum sollt ich nit schwedisch sein?*⁵² "Is there any good reason why I shouldn't be pro-Swedish, my worthy Emperor? Pray, do you observe your oaths and the highest laws of the land, or do you ride roughshod over everything? Haven't you made a diabolical covenant with the Pope to harry the Empire by constant wars? You are a puppet of the Jesuits, a hypocrite and a violator of pledges, you with your godless, accursed army!" A prose colloquy on the same subject also exists; another poem, too, deals with the same matter.⁵³ In the Royal Graphic Museum at Munich there is an etching depicting the murder of Wallenstein; appended to it are eight verses describing the subject.⁵⁴ The Duke of Friedland was a victim of Spanish intrigue and murder, says the writer, and without condoning Wallenstein altogether, he attacks the faithlessness of the Emperor. Other verses in the same tenor are even more bitter against imperial perfidy.⁵⁵ Wallenstein was wronged, they claim. After having reestablished the prestige and power of the Emperor, he was treacherously rewarded. A good warning to readers to flee from Austrian tyranny! *Der Kaiserlichen Gesang von Gross Glogau* (1642),⁵⁶ finally, is a humorous poem satirizing the imperial troops under Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, who vainly besieged the Swedish garrison at Gross Glogau in Silesia. The soldiers are described as disgusted

⁵¹ August Hartmann, *Histor. Volkslieder u. Zeitgedichte vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, 3 volumes.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Vol. I., No. 65, pp. 280-282.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 283, dated 1632.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., No. 78, p. 304, dated 1634.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., Nos. 80-82, pp. 305-307.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., No. 88, pp. 322-323.

and tired of the siege, but Leopold attempts to fire their courage by the following hapless words :

*Ihr chrlischen Soldaten, halt' noch ein wenig Stand,
Abzuzichen bringt uns grosse Schand;
Wär mir auch gar ein schlechter Gewinn,
Weil ich des Kaisers Bruder bin.*

(The speaker was a brother of Emperor Ferdinand III.)

Abraham a Santa Clara, the ardent, pugnacious preacher of the time, will be taken up later in connection with Schiller.

CHAPTER V

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BEFORE THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

From a literary point of view the first half of the eighteenth century in Germany was not very fruitful. Unstable political conditions contributed largely to this state of affairs, but the law of flux and reflux, too, came into play. The seventeenth century had been a period of literary promise, stifled in the bud; it was followed by an era of stagnation and gradual preparation for far greater activity. Before proceeding to the classical age, therefore, we shall pause awhile in retrospection and in consideration of general political as well as social conditions in Germany at the time.

The German Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century consisted of approximately 9,000 square miles, enclosed by definite, compact boundaries. During the eighteenth century, however, it extended over some 3,000 additional miles and comprised a population of twenty-five millions.¹ There were more than three hundred independent states and fifteen hundred petty feudal provinces, imperial cities and towns. More than eighty of the practically sovereign states were each only twelve or less square miles in extent; of these about a dozen had eight to twelve miles each, approximately thirty were two to eight miles in extent, and thirty others comprised one to two miles each. The remainder covered even less territory. In the North and in the East there existed a tolerable degree of solidarity, but the southern and western sections of the country presented a pitiable spectacle of disruption. The ten imperial districts (*Kreise*), that came into existence early in the sixteenth century, had practically no organization to speak of. Only two of them, Franconia and Swabia, could boast of a modest degree of efficiency in this respect. Hence

¹ Biedermann, *Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, Vol. I., pp. 3-4.

these sections soon came to be considered characteristically imperial and were often referred to simply as "the Empire" in a restricted sense.² To the student the ten districts present a baffling variety of governments, systems of tolls, coinage, measures, and import and export regulations. Plenipotentiary powers, even of life and death, were in the hands of the ruthless princelings. The Emperor himself was powerless except in name. Whereas in the time of Frederick I. his annual income had been about thirty-six million marks, it had sunk in the eighteenth century to a paltry twenty-four thousand marks.³ The lawful members of the imperial diet, the rulers and princes, no longer attended the legislative sessions in person, but sent insignificant delegates with written instructions to transact the petty business (p. 29). These sessions were sometimes attended by as few as twenty-five persons (p. 31). Conditions in the Imperial Court of Justice were no better. Important cases remained on the bulletin for decades and were choked off by endless red tape when they finally came up for decision (pp. 25-26). As early as 1620 there were fifty thousand civil cases hanging fire, while in 1772 this prodigious number had increased by one fifth (p. 32). One case involving real estate dragged on for 188 years and was finally dropped because the litigant families had become extinct. Often cases were simply given up by the court and referred to a local bishop or prince who might be one of the litigants.

The imperial army, too, presented a pitiable spectacle. It consisted of a motley crowd of some twenty thousand mercenaries, with no unity, no *esprit de corps*, not even homogeneous uniforms (p. 44). It was absolutely imperative that the staff of generals be composed of an equal number of Catholics and Lutherans, a fact which led to endless disputes (p.

² Cf. Grimm Wb., Vol. 8, sub *Reich*. Cf. also the following passages in Schiller: Jonas, *Schillers Briefe*, III., p. 352: *Die Menschen sind freier, als in einer Reichsstadt zu erwarten war* (to Körner from Heilbronn). *Ibid.*, p. 353: *Es ist erstaunlich, wie es hier im Reich von Nachdrücken wimmelt* (to Göschen from Ludwigsburg). In *Wallensteins Lager* the sutler Gustel of Blasewitz says of her niece: *'s ist meiner Schwester Kind aus dem Reich* (5. Auftritt).

³ Biedermann, p. 16. Hereafter referred to in text by page numbers.

45). Corruption prevailed in the quartermaster's department, and there was open rivalry and even hostility between the troop contingents from the various states (p. 48). The important fortresses of the Empire, Kehl, Phillipsburg and Mayence were sadly neglected and hence useless. The system of taxation was antiquated and unjust; the Emperor himself was powerless to enforce payments, being dependent entirely on the good-will of the petty rulers. Hence it often took several decades to raise even a single tax (pp. 52-54).

Throughout most of the eighteenth century, moreover, the presence of two powerful hostile sections within the Empire, Austria and Prussia, frustrated all hopes for unity. As was noted in the previous chapter in connection with Moschersch, even the conception of the existence of a powerful Empire faded in the minds of men. Only the very small principalities looked to the Empire for help; the larger, more influential states considered it foreign. Biedermann⁴ quotes Eggers' *Geschichte der Menschheit* as follows: "At best only the citizens of small imperial towns are still concerned about conditions in Germany. Every German likes to count himself among the Austrians, the Prussians, the Saxons, the Hanoverians, the Mecklenburgers; only those who have no special fatherland call themselves Germans." Contemporary national heroes were naturally unknown, the nearest approach being Frederick the Great. Some writers, many of them highly intelligent and influential, even went so far as to defend the schismatic, particularistic condition of the country and to call it a boon.⁵

Under the prevailing circumstances patriotism could, of course, exist only under severe handicaps. Hence not a single one of the great classical poets, Goethe, Schiller, Lessing or Wieland, can be termed a patriot in the accepted sense of the word. It is the same with their contemporaries in other fields of endeavor. Two noted exceptions, however, are the pub-

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66. Cf. also Gervinus, *Geschichte d. deut. Dichtung*, 5. ed., II., p. 477 ff. and V., pp. 426-427.

licists Karl Friedrich v. Moser and Justus Möser, who were evermore filled with enthusiasm for their glorious country, altho fully realizing its shortcomings. They will be further considered in the following pages. The formal historians of the period, on the other hand, are quite worthless, for their works are dry, jejune, longwinded, and without sense of proportion.

Publicists.

In the previous chapter attention was called to the fact that as early as 1643 Conring had questioned the theory of imperial world dominion. Not until one hundred years later, however, was the imperial idea actually ridiculed, namely by Joseph a Hontheim in his *Dissertatio inauguralis de Romanorum Imperatoris genuina idea* (Aug. Trevir., 1760), which displays a bolder, more original attitude than most similar works of the time. On the whole the publicists were either too shortsighted or too bigoted to see things as they actually were. Furthermore the theory of the balance of power had only recently been evolved and commanded considerable attention in books and periodicals.⁶ It led to an absurd, fatuous notion that the Holy Roman Empire was an absolute necessity for the political balance of Europe and even called forth a pamphlet which pretended to prove that the Empire should take part in the War of the Austrian Succession for the sake of assisting in the re-establishment of the European balance.⁷ Naturally men holding such distorted views took the Empire very seriously.

Rabener.

In studying the history of German satire, a subject intimately related to our theme, one cannot help noting the gradual decline and degeneration of public life, courage, and outspokenness during the age preceding the classical period.

⁶ Cf., e. g., L. M. Kahle, *Trutina Europae, quae vulgo appellatur die Balance von Europa praecipua belli et pacis norma*. Göttingen, 1744.—Mentioned in *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1744, 19, pp. 175-176—answered in *Freimüthige und bescheidene Erinnerungen*, Leipzig, 1745.

⁷ *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1746, 88, pp. 700-703.

Moscherosch, a contemporary of the Thirty Years' War, still attacked more or less openly the public abuses in state and society. Lauremberg, Rachel, and Logau followed his main tendency, but laid more emphasis on the outer signs of political decay, the contamination of speech and of general customs. Neukirch and Wernigke stressed this phase even more, while Rabener's subject matter may positively be called trifling. He himself frankly admits the difficulty of writing satire in his day.⁸ The poet who dares use the satirical form, he avers, arouses the enmity and suspicion of all. "In Germany," he exclaims, "I don't dare tell a country schoolmaster truths which in London a Lord Archbishop must listen to in silence or else mend his ways." Yet his conception of satire is modest, indeed, for he deprecates all ridicule at the expense of the Government and the state religion.⁹

Gleim.

Gleim and his Halberstadt friends are characterized by a strong patriotic feeling for Prussia, which finds its best expression in the *Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier*, songs that exult in the defeat of the imperial troops in various engagements of the Seven Years' War. The usual appellation applied to the enemy is *Tolpatsch und Pandur* and the tone is entirely depreciative. "You are merely delaying your own destruction," says the poet to the imperial troops,¹⁰ "and your powerful army is a joke in our eyes. You are skilled only in the tactics of flight."¹¹ In the hymn of victory after the battle of Rossbach¹² Gleim gives us a grimly half-humorous description of the various fleeing detachments and lauds his idol Frederick the Great to the skies. The song addressed to the

⁸ *Sämmtliche Schriften*, 4. Theil, Leipzig, 1777, p. 11 ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18. Cf. also his essay *Vom Missbrauche der Satyre*, Schr., 1. Theil, esp. pp. 99-100.

¹⁰ *Preussische Kriegslieder von einem Grenadier*, v. I. W. L. Gleim, ed. Sauer in *Deutsche Literaturdenkmale*, No. 4, p. 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Empress and Queen after the recapture of Breslau¹³ seriously urges Maria Theresia to accede to good judgment, admit defeat and make peace. Her victorious foe, claims Gleim, is invincible anyway. In the latter statement we have the keynote to the poet's attitude in the entire collection. The songs are not so much satirical against the Empire *per se* as against the Austrian government, the haughty enemy of the demigod Frederick the Great.

Uz.

In Uz and Cronek, on the other hand, we note an elegiac tone, a plaintive expression of sorrow over the condition of the country. Especially Uz is affected by this mood again and again. In the poem *Das bedrängte Deutschland*,¹⁴ for example, he inquires how long Germany will continue to mutilate its own person and how long it will serve as a football for others. He speaks with predilection of the good old times when the Germanic barbarians still struggled for liberty in their uncouth but valiant way¹⁵ and regrets the deterioration of the country.¹⁶ *An die Deutschen*¹⁷ is a severe arraignment of the degenerate, effeminate character of Uz's compatriots in contradistinction to the bold, natural, hardy warriors of the time of Hermann. *An die Freyheit*, finally,¹⁸ urges the German people to arise and shake off the shameful fetters of slavery imposed on the country by its enemies.

Hagedorn.

Friedrich von Hagedorn, now chiefly remembered for his fables and Anacreontics, is the author of the humorous, satirical poem *Mesendore*,¹⁹ which describes an imaginary subter-

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁴ *Sämtliche Poetische Werke*, ed. Sauer in *Deutsche Literaturdenkmale*, No. 33, p. 39 ff.

¹⁵ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 56 ff.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 124 ff.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 153 ff.

¹⁹ *Poetische Werke*, Hamburg, 1769, Vol. 3, pp. 54-57.

ranean land having as subjects animals and trees endowed with reason. All that is necessary for acquiring the franchise in this realm is respect for the powers that be (Str. 2). The lion serves as monarch, the elephants are the councillors, and a giddy chameleon acts as chancellor, while the foxes and reptiles are ready at his beck and call (Str. 3). The ostriches and peacocks represent the knights, the oxen and cattle the townspeople, the sheep, marmots and pigs the peasants (Str. 4). Hagedorn closes with the ironical words:

*Der Unterthanen Unterschied
In Thieren, Bäumen, Pflanzen,
Ist, weil der Staat nach Würden blüht,
Einstimmig in dem Ganzen.
Was hier ein Amt zu führen hat,
Dient sich und auch vielleicht dem Staat;
Der scheint bekanntern Reichen
Hierinnen fast zu gleichen.*

Lichtwer and Kästner.

Another fable-writer of the time, Magnus Gottfried Lichtwer, pokes fun at the dilatoriness of the imperial courts in a similar way. He says in *Das Reichsgericht der Thiere*²⁰ that the snake is the imperial bailiff, while his assessors are somnolent marmots, and that the lawyers are snails, who demand a respite of a century or more. Further:

*Man sagt, dass dies Gericht nie jemand Unrecht that,
Und dass von ihrem Spruch nie Jemand appellirte,
Denn eh' der Reichsschultheis ein Urtheil publicirte,
Verstarb Partei und Advocat.*

In another poem, *Fabel 25, Die Flinte und der Hase*²¹ Lichtwer similarly ridicules the backwardness of the authorities and compares the laws to a gun whose owner is asleep. His con-

²⁰ *Schriften*, ed. Pott, Halberstadt, 1828, Buch 2, S. 65.

²¹ D. N. L., 73, p. 39.

temporary, Abraham Gotthelf Kästner, assumes the same satirical attitude.²²

Folksong and the Like.

Sectional outbursts against the authority of the Emperor were comparatively rare, yet they occurred occasionally. An excellent example is the peasant rebellion of 1705-1706 in Bavaria, in which, as Hartmann tells us,²³ flags were borne thru the streets with the following legend:

*Wir wollen lieber bayrisch sterben,
Als in des Kaisers Unfug verderben.*

A song of about the same time, entitled *Bayerland an seinen Kurfürsten in der letzten Audienz* (1703),²⁴ is a dialogue in which Bavaria tries to dissuade the Elector Emanuel from war against the Empire, but is answered by the ruler:

*Ich lass den Kaiser Kaiser sein,
Und such gleichwohl am Reich das Mein!*

After the Peace of Rastatt (1714), which concluded the War of the Spanish Succession, the poem *Derer Europäischen Mächte erneutes Friedens-Interesse*²⁵ was written to ridicule Emperor Charles VI. because he had expected more than he had received. H. Stoll²⁶ quotes Wilhelm Oncken, *Das Zeitalter Friedrichs des Grossen*, to the effect that at the death of Emperor Charles VI., the father of Maria Theresia, in 1740, the populace in Vienna no longer believed in the Empire and favored the cause of Elector Karl Albert of Bavaria, a participant in the War of the Austrian Succession. Banners were borne around the city:

²² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 102, where he mentions the unity and concord of German rulers as a chimerical dream.

²³ *Historische Volkslieder und Zeitgedichte*, II., p. 182.

²⁴ Ditfurth: *Deutsche Volks- und Gesellschaftslieder des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, p. 115.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

²⁶ *Geschichtliches Lesebuch*, Hamburg, 1905, 2. Theil, S. 48.

*Vivat, der Kaiser ist tot.
Wir bekommen jetzt grosses Brot.
Der Lothringer ist uns zu schlecht;
Der Bayer ist uns eben recht.*

Naturally the Seven Years' War called forth a mass of popular literature on both sides. Gleim's songs have already been noticed. The more outspoken, and hence more interesting, anonymous compositions remain to be considered. Very frequent in this period are songs composed by soldiers or partisans of Prussia and Frederick the Great, which satirize Austria, that is the Empire, and everything connected with it, especially its inefficient army. Ditfurth in his collection of folksongs of the Seven Years' War cites several squibs at the expense of the imperial army. One of them says in a mocking tone that the poor, longsuffering imperial army is an object that could move even a stone to compassion;²⁷ it is incompetent and half starved, and instead of defeating Frederick the Great easily, as it had expected, not only it but the French army as well was worsted. Further (Str. 10) :

*O du geschlagne Reichsarmee,
Schrei mit den Franzen: Mondieu!
B'hüt Gott uns vor der Preussen Muth
Und schone unserm Heldenblut,
O dass wir müssen weder heu'r,
Noch künftig schmecken Preussisch Feu'r.*

Another similar song²⁸ claims that the chief failing of the Emperor's army consists in its ability to flee in the face of the enemy and speaks further of the rank cowardice of most of the contingents, advising them to return home. Facetiously the author states that a more appropriate name than *Reichsarmee* would be *Reissausarmee* (Str. 7). A third poem of the same type²⁹ alleges that the imperial soldiers have gained universal renown for faint-heartedness :

²⁷ Ditfurth, *Dic historischen Volkslieder des siebenjährigen Krieges*, p. 36 ff.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

*Weilen nämlich gleich weck, wéck
Weck, weck, weck voll Angst und Schreck,
Liefst durch Distel, Dorn und Dreck,
Hast nicht einmal still gestanden.*

Still another³⁰ claims that Frederick the Great need but betray his presence by a slight noise in order to frighten the whole imperial army into flight. In the song entitled *Poetische Gedanken*³¹ the imperial soldiers warn Frederick that his "caca- career is nearing its end" and are told by him in a humorous vein to lie homeward and sleep themselves sober. A *Kriegslied der Preussen im siebenjährigen Kriege* (1758)³² expresses similar sentiments. *Das grosse Hahnengeschrei*, finally,³³ ridicules the ostensibly henpecked husband of Maria Theresia, Francis I.

Periodicals.

An examination of the various periodicals of the time, as for instance the divers *Musenalmanache*, the *Göttinger Gelehrte Anzeigen*, the *Beyträge zum Vergnügen des Verstandes und Witzes*, discloses some empty praise of the Emperor and of the Empire, but no political satire worthy of the name. The magazines in question were, of course, devoted primarily to *belles lettres* and were subject to distinct English and French influences. The last mentioned periodical is perhaps a fair example. In its four volumes, published between the years 1744–1748, it contains only the following material of even remote interest to us, an ode *Der Wütrich*,³⁴ a poem *An Seine Hochwürden, den Herrn Abt Mosheim*³⁵ complaining against lack of patriotism among Germans, and some verses entitled *Kaiser Sigismund*,³⁶ praising the latter for his leniency and mod-

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70 ff.

³² Erk-Böhme, *Deutscher Liederhort*, II., p. 142.

³³ Ditfurth, *Die historischen Volkslieder des siebenjährigen Krieges*, p. 78 ff.

³⁴ 1. Band, 4. Stück.

³⁵ 2. Band, 1. Stück.

³⁶ 4. Buch, 1. Stück.

eration in dealing with his enemies. Two frequently mentioned and very able publications of the Göttingen Professor August Ludwig Schlözer, the *Briefwechsel meist statistischen Inhalts*, one volume (1775), and the *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts*, ten volumes (1776-1782), afford a good insight into contemporary publicistic conditions. Chronologically these works belong to a later period, nevertheless for the sake of convenience they will be considered here. They present sources in the field of history, general statistics and current events and are in the form of correspondence edited by Schlözer. The great care and fearful conservatism which the editor felt compelled to exercise in the course of his work are very manifest. In fact, he himself admits that he has taken every precaution not to offend those in authority.³⁷ Hence his attitude toward Joseph II. is almost adulatory.³⁸ The nearest approach to satire is probably found in a documentary report on an erstwhile settlement of Count v. Hanau in South America in 1669.³⁹ We read (p. 254): *Auch arme appanagierte deutsche Fürsten und Grafen sollen Land in Indien nemen; in kurzem könnten sie da grösser, wie die Principalen ihres Hauses selbst hier aussen, werden.*

Other material that appeared in periodicals, either originally or in reprint, will be considered under individual authors.

³⁷ Cf. *Vorrede* to *Briefwechsel meist statistischen Inhalts*, written February, 1775; also *Vorbericht* to Vol. 5 of *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts*, written November, 1779.

³⁸ *Briefwechsel meist historischen und politischen Inhalts*, 9. Theil (1781), Heft L., Nr. 12, p. 106 ff. *Ibid.*, Heft LII., Brief IV., d. 23. Juni 1781.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2. Theil, Heft X., Nr. 40, p. 237 ff.

CHAPTER VI

GOETHE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

The so-called classical period of German literature, the age of the immortal triad, Goethe, Schiller and Lessing, is of the greatest importance for our subject. For at that time more than ever the Holy Roman Empire was discussed by men of letters in an increasingly satirical vein. And deservedly so, since the structure had by now indeed become a huge laughing stock of the literary world. Its absolute uselessness, its incohesiveness, its torpidity and its cumbersome, antiquated customs presented a rich field not only to the wags of the day but also to serious-minded men. Latter-day students of the period have frequently called attention to this fact and have pointed out isolated cases of satirical comment on the Empire. A connected study of the subject, however, has never been undertaken.

J. J. and K. F. v. Moser.

Attention was called in the previous chapter to the conspicuous absence of patriotism thruout the period. The majority of writers were consequently quite apathetic in regard to political developments at home. A feeling of supreme disgust took hold of them and they turned to other more pleasing, albeit oftentimes recondite paths. Yet there were exceptions. Notable among the latter are the two splendid figures Johann Jakob von Moser and his son Karl Friedrich, and a writer with whom the former are sometimes confused, Justus Möser. Genuine patriots all three of them, they displayed untiring energy for the cause of more efficient government. In fact, the Moser pair even became martyrs to this cause, for they suffered unwarrantable persecution at the hands of their tyran-

nical rulers,¹ who recognized in them highly dangerous critics. In his work *Vom deutschen Nationalgeist* (1766), for instance, Karl Friedrich showed that altho Germany was logically at the head of all nations by virtue of its investiture with the imperial honors, it had become an object of contempt, a house divided against itself, the booty of all. He is especially bitter toward the princes who reserve the right to obey the Emperor at their own discretion and magnanimously tolerate the Aulic Council, provided it caters to their own desires. Furthermore he attacks the powerful estates who bully their weaker neighbors. With clear insight he discloses in the *Patriotische Briefe* the chief lack of the country, a patriotically inclined mediating and stabilizing force, which could act both as a check and a protector in the relations of the Emperor with the estates.

Möser.

Justus Möser is the author of the interesting *Patriotische Phantasien*, a work praised highly by Goethe in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Möser, too, laments the absence of a mediatorial element between the Emperor and the princes and sees the only possibility of salvation in the municipalities. But since the latter were in a state of disruption, this hope was forlorn. He studies the decline of the trades in small cities² and complains of the absolute degeneration in Germany of the spirit of trade and commerce with foreign countries,³ a field in which, he says, Germany has missed golden opportunities.⁴ In an essay which gives advice on the establishment of a proposed grain trading company on the Weser river⁵ Möser is quite satirical in regard to the lack of German nationalism. He shows the impossibility of fostering patriotism without centralized national interests, the impracticability of a national theatre without a national

¹ Biedermann, *Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, I., pp. 38-39. Cf. also J. J. Moser, *Lebensgeschichte*, 1777; H. vom Busche, *K. Fr. v. Moser*, 1846; and *Die beiden Moser* in Vol. I. of *Germania*, 1851.

² *Patriotische Phantasien*, ed. Voigts, I. Theil, Nr. 32.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 52.

capital,⁶ and in a footnote significantly points out that Germans even lack characteristic national curses, watchwords and allusions. He studies, too, the interest, or rather lack of it, which various rulers in history displayed toward the towns.⁷ Finally he wrote a paper making suggestions as to a more efficient maintenance of the Imperial Court of Justice.⁸ Originally the essay was satirically called: *A very important suggestion which will not be carried out*, which was later modified. It is satirical in tone against *das heilige römische Reichskammergericht*, *von dessen Notwendigkeit jeder rechtschaffene Mann überzeugt ist* and urges the introduction of a protective tariff. As a youth Möser also wrote a drama *Arminius*, which, in accord with the author's practical turn of mind, contains repeated references to contemporary conditions.⁹

Klopstock.

The attitude that Klopstock took regarding politics is peculiarly anomalous. In a broad sense he was thoroughly patriotic, but despised Frederick the Great and hence disregarded him and the Prussian state entirely. Feeling the need, however, of giving vent to his love of fatherland in some tangible way, he composed carefully elaborated odes in glowing praise of Germany of his day as a direct development of the Frankish and Gothic realms of the first century after Christ.¹⁰ The contemporary German princes he calls descendants of Hermann and their armies Cheruskian.¹¹ The ode *An den Kaiser* (1781)¹² is a sincere encomium of Emperor Joseph II. After mentioning several instances in which Germany suffered humiliation at the hands of Rome, notably the Canossa incident of Henry IV., Klopstock points to Joseph as a new savior. *Heinrich der Vogler*¹³ expresses similar but broader sentiments of

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 53.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2. Theil, Nr. 74.

⁹ Vid. Weissenfels, *Goethe im Sturm und Drang*, p. 250.

¹⁰ Cf., e. g., *Unsere Sprache*, 1767.

¹¹ Cf. the ode *Wir und Sie*, 1766.

¹² Muncker-Pawel, II., pp. 29-30.

¹³ *Ibid.*, I., p. 78.

Klopstockian patriotism. At first blush such views sound almost ridiculous to the unbiased reader, familiar with conditions at the time; in fact, they could well-nigh be regarded as satirical, were they not so sincere. The truth of the matter is that Klopstock, like many of his contemporaries, was too much of an idealist to comprehend or even to study actual political conditions. Serenely and calmly he lived alone in his own world of poetic fancy.

Lessing.

Lessing, too, was politically a quietist. As early as in the articles contributed to the *Berlinische Priviligirte Zeitung*¹⁴ he disclaims as a scholar all interest in politics. His characterization of patriotism as an heroic weakness, with which he gladly dispensed, is well known.¹⁵ On the whole he remained true to this principle thruout his life. Occasionally, to be sure, he mentions the subject in letters and in the posthumous fragments, and in *Ernst und Falk* he even engages in more profound, albeit theoretical speculation on the state, its origins and its *raison d'être*. We may then call him a cosmopolitan¹⁶ in the broadest and best sense of the word, a theorist far ahead of his times. He exemplifies what may be termed the higher patriotism, an ideal toward which the world at large is still vainly struggling. Which element contributed more to this attitude, Lessing's stern, unemotional nature, or the wretched condition of his country, must remain an open question.¹⁷

Wieland.

It seems to be no coincidence that the scenes of some of Wieland's novels are laid in the Graeco-Roman world at the

¹⁴ Lachmann-Muncker, Vols. 4, 5 and 7 *passim*.

¹⁵ In a letter to Gleim of February 14, 1759. Lachmann-Muncker, 17, 158.

¹⁶ That he was sincere in his cosmopolitanism is proved by a review in the *Berlinische Priviligirte Zeitung* of 1751 in which he criticises a misanthropic, carping malcontent, who claims to be a cosmopolitan. Lachmann-Muncker, 4, 307.

¹⁷ Heinrich v. Treitschke, *Histor. u. Polit. Aufsätze*, 6. Aufl., 1. Band, S. 68-74, treats this phase of Lessing's activity very sympathetically.

time of its decadence, when men were compelled to seek refuge in Stoic renunciation or Platonic idealism. For, as Biedermann points out,¹⁸ the Germany that Wieland knew was in the same plight. There can hardly be doubt, then, that he was deliberately pointing to his own country when he wrote. Politically he was made of the same stuff as Lessing, altho he was more outspoken in his views. Any reader who is versed at all in the conditions of the time and who is familiar with Bernhard Seuffert's pamphlet,¹⁹ must see in the *Abderiten* at least some reference to contemporary Germany. Just as *Agathon* discloses the author's own spiritual development and *Don Sylvio* reveals a sojourn in "a small republic,"²⁰ while chapter eight of the second part of *Der goldene Spiegel* refers to Joseph II.,²¹ *Die Abderiten* gives us a picture, in part at least, of conditions in Germany. Seuffert points out some very concrete instances of this,²² refuting the claims of Wieland himself, who attempted to deny such references.²³

Broadly speaking, Abdera is a composite photograph of many of the smaller German cities of the eighteenth century, as for instance Mannheim. That the picture is accurate is proved by the numerous complaints that were heard soon after the publication of the first two parts.²⁴ Much of the work, however, is a general scathing satire on conditions prevailing thruout the Empire. The people of Abdera, for example, appoint a commission to manage the finances of the national theatre;²⁵ the delegates, however, prove incompetent, allow errors to enter into their calculations, and involve the city in serious debts. This state of affairs continues for several years, until the root of the trouble is finally discovered! The famous

¹⁸ *Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, II., 2, p. 219. Goethe, too, makes the same point in his eulogistic speech on Wieland (1813), Weimar ed., Vol. 36, p. 331.

¹⁹ *Wielands Abderiten, Vortrag v. Bernhard Seuffert*. Berlin, 1878.

²⁰ Cf. fourth note to Book III. of *Don Sylvio*.

²¹ Cf. *Auswahl denkwürdiger Briefe v. C. M. Wieland*, II., 3, 5, 46, 48.

²² Seuffert, pp. 9, 10, 11, 21-26.

²³ Cf. Wieland's letter to Schwan in *Weim. Jahrbuch*, V., 18 ff.

²⁴ Cf. Pröhle in D. N. L., 56³, p. xvi.

²⁵ Book 3, Chapter 4. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

case involving the donkey's shadow, which Wieland describes at length in Book 4, also savors strongly of satire. The wheels of justice turned just as slowly at Abdera, it seems, as they did at Wetzlar, for Wieland compares their movement with the course of a snail,²⁶ and says that cases usually dragged on as long as the financial resources or the patience of the litigants permitted. The hairsplitting, pedantic decision, too, rendered by Militias,²⁷ is a takeoff on juridical proceedings of the time, as is also the appeal to higher authority and the partisanship of the whole population. The search for precedents, finally, described in Book 4, Chapter 8, reveals none other than the rusty imperial machinery of justice, which never decided a case, but only added to its hopeless intricacy. Wieland closes the novel with the hope that it will be read only as long as it calls forth a response thruout the country,²⁸ that is, as long as the shoe fits.

Interesting from a political point of view are Wieland's *Gespräche unter vier Augen*, especially No. 3, entitled *Was ist zu thun?*,²⁹ a dialogue between Wilibald, the German, and Heribert, the French partisan, on conditions in Germany at the time (1798). The former feels the humiliation of his country keenly and expresses chagrin at the thought that the once glorious and majestic Empire, the erstwhile pride of the whole world, should suddenly be relegated to the condition of pedestal, as it were, to serve the newly arisen Gallic colossus (p. 20). Heribert answers that strictly speaking, Germany is not a nation at all but an aggregate of some 200 states of every conceivable size. And no one should expect, he adds, that such a structure will subsist forever, especially after its constitution has become untenable and the principles of its feudal system antiquated (p. 21). Even the heroes of the sixteenth century, as Franz v. Sickingen and Ulrich v. Hutten would be helpless at the present time, he argues, comparing the Empire with an old, dilapidated Gothic structure, still surviving but consid-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

²⁷ Book 4, Chapter 4.

²⁸ Book 5, Chapter 10, p. 320.

²⁹ Appeared first in *Neuer Teutscher Merkur*, April, 1798. D. N. L., 566, pp. 19-35.

erably weakened by an earthquake. Germany's chief problem, according to him, is the question of self-preservation.

Herder.

If ever there existed a man of dynamic nature endowed with deep, elemental passions, it was Herder. Naturally, then, he felt more keenly than the average mould of men the disgrace and humiliation of his country. Gleim saw in him the ideal of the real, true German,³⁰ and Böttiger called him the noble champion of the silently suffering nation, a second Hutten, as it were.³¹ Further, when the Frenchman Cacault traveled in Germany in 1773 for the purpose of studying native character, the Hanoverian physician Zimmerman sent him to Herder in Bückeburg.³² And finally when in 1787 Margrave Karl Friedrich of Baden founded an institute for fostering public spirit in Germany, Herder was asked to develop the plans.³³

In the third chapter of the eighteenth book of his *Ideen* Herder speaks of the Franks and of Charles the Great. He considers the empire of the latter the first solid foundation for a European monarchy.³⁴ He praises Charlemagne highly, but expresses the wish that his crown might have perished with him, at least as far as Germany is concerned (p. 748), for it was an oppressive burden on the heads of his successors. Herder then continues in his majestic language to portray the unfortunate quarrels and the gradual decay of the Empire which ensued after the death of Charles the Great, its soul. He calls it a corpse, which has for centuries lain in a state of decomposition, and he hopes that in 1800 a new Charlemagne will arise who will modify the old machine. In the fifth chapter of the same book (p. 761) he expresses the assurance that the seductive splendor of the Empire did Germany more harm than good and mentions the "general chaos" of the German

³⁰ *Von und an Herder*, I., 159.

³¹ Suphan, *Werke*, Vol. 18, p. 554.

³² Jonetz, *Ueber Herders nationale Gesinnung*.

³³ v. Weech in *Preuss. Jahrbuch*, XXI., p. 695.

³⁴ Volume 4², p. 746 of *Herders Werke* in D. N. L.

constitution,³⁵ which was magnified by the entangling alliance with the Pope.³⁶ He demonstrates, too, that a conglomerate nation, which lacks cohesion, and a spirit of mutual cooperation, i. e., national character, is a monstrosity.³⁷ In *Ueber die neuere deutsche Literatur*³⁸ he compares Germany with the tower of Babel because of its particularistic, partisan spirit. He speaks much in the same tone as Möser. On another occasion he quotes from a letter of Frederick the Great to Voltaire of 1759,³⁹ in which Frederick jokingly says that for the coming year he will have opportunity to subdue only the Queen of Hungary, the Mandarins of the Holy Empire, and the robbers of Lapland. Moreover in a eulogy on Joseph II., written soon after the death of the Emperor, Herder asserts that the great ruler became an unfortunate victim of the foul atmosphere prevailing in his own realm.⁴⁰

Herder also wrote several poems on the subject. *An den Genius von Deutschland* (1770)⁴¹ is an utterance of bitter grief over the mortification and enervation of Germany and contains the metaphor, which we found as early as Sachs, of the distressed mother whose children have been crushed at her bosom. *Deutschlands Ehre* (1793),⁴² a poem of the same tenor, lauds Henry the Fowler as a model German ruler, but bemoans the fact that Italian rivers are tinged with German blood and that German rulers pillage and plunder one another. Another poetic composition entitled *An den Kaiser* (1780)⁴³ addresses Joseph II.:

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 762; also p. 767.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 767, 776.

³⁷ *Ideen*, IX., 4. Suphan, XIII., pp. 384-385.

³⁸ I., p. 141 in Suphan ed. Cf. also *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, Vol. 5, p. 25 of *Werke* in D. N. L.

³⁹ *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, D. N. L., Vol. 5, p. 42—from *Oeuvres posthumes de Frédéric le Grand Roie de Prusse*, 4 vols., Berlin, 1788, Vol. 2, p. 323.

⁴⁰ D. N. L., Herder, Vol. 5, p. 47.

⁴¹ Suphan, *Werke*, XXIX., p. 329 ff.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 580 ff.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 551. In the Index it is dated 1778.

*O Kaiser, Du von neun und neunzig Fürsten
und Ständen, wie des Meeres Sand,
das Oberhaupt, gib uns, wornach wir dürsten,
ein Deutsches Vaterland . . . ,*

while the poem *Germanien* is a call to Germany to awaken.⁴⁴ A satirical hexametric composition entitled *Luthers Fabel vom Löwen und Esel* (1792)⁴⁵ is worth considering at greater length. The lion, the king of the whole animal world, lying on his deathbed, calls his subjects to a final diet and has crown prince Leo elected as his successor. The old ruler dies and immediately sedition, prompted by the false advisers to whom the king had lent ear, runs rampant. The estates are divided as to the best course to pursue, until the crafty fox, in the typical verbiage of contemporary imperial officialdom suggests the donkey as ruler and full of awe points to the holy cross discernible on the back of the latter. The assemblage waxes enthusiastic over this stimulating suggestion:

“*Wir haben gefunden
Unsern König, vom Himmel uns selbst zum König erkoren,
Weltliches Reich und geistliches Reich zu regieren geschaffen.
Schaut die Ohren! Zum Beicht- und Klaganhörern erhöhet!
Hört die Stimme! (Erhebe die Stimm', Ehrwürdiger Esel!)
Wer kann singen wie Er? wer redet aus Herz so gewaltig?
Wer ruft mutiger aus? wer kann allmächtiger gebieten?
Nichts ist an unsrem Bruder, das nicht die herrlichsten Ehren,
Papstes und Königs Ehren, verdient. Und schet das Kreuz da!”—
Alle sahen das Kreuz, und fielen nieder, und riefen:
“*Heil dem Könige, Heil! dem Gottgegebenen Esel!
Ihm dem Mehrer des Reichs!*” So war er zum Fürsten erwählt.*

The exiled lion retires in sorrow to the wilderness, accompanied by his faithful councillors. At a meeting the dog speaks and questions the donkey's right to the throne as well as the venerableness of the cross. It is voted to arrange a single combat between the two claimants. The lion wins the first test

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 210 ff.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 574 ff. In the Index it is called *Der Wettstreit um die Krone. Eine Fabel.*

by leaping over a brook, while his rival, the donkey, slips in the mire. The donkey, however, wins the second test by catching a raven thru mere chance, and also the third by deceit. Convinced at last that the cross must after all impart supernatural power, the lion yields, but is rightfully reinstated when the dog informs the donkey's owner of the affair. The poem *Coalition*,⁴⁶ finally, which dates from the period after 1790, is a protest against the war agitation of the time and the end of the so-called First Coalition. It voices the usual belief of the time that a poet had better shun politics altogether⁴⁷ and assigns a much higher, more important place to humanity (*die Menschlichkeit*).⁴⁸

Bürgers.

Bürgers, too, forswears politics,⁴⁹ and in a dramatic poem, *Der Bauer* (1775),⁵⁰ gives vent to his wrath against the ruthless, selfish princes, who ride roughshod over the rights of others. "Do you claim power from God?" he lets the peasant exclaim to his lord. "God brings blessings, while you rob. You are not connected with the Deity, tyrant!" In fact, throughout his works Bürgers reveals strong democratic leanings. In their correspondence he as well as Göckingk show their hate for the arbitrary rule and the political mismanagement of the princes. Furthermore, Bürgers was an enthusiastic friend of the French Revolution. His free-mason speech, delivered in 1790,⁵¹ gives a concise summary of his political ideals.

⁴⁶ Herders Gedichte, ed. J. G. Müller, 1817, Vol. I., p. 267. Cf. also Suphan, XVIII, 348 and 355-356 and G. Hauff in Archiv f. d. Studium der neueren Sprachen. Vol. 66, p. 308.

⁴⁷ The Goethean sentiment *Ein politisch Lied! Ein leidig Lied!* is here expressed in the words *Politisch Lied ein böses, böses Lied* as a proverb.

⁴⁸ The idea is identical with that expressed in the epigram of Goethe-Schiller:

*Zur Nation euch zu bilden, ihr hofft es, Deutsche, vergebens;
Bildet dafür, ihr könnt's, freier zu Menschen euch aus.
(Cf. Hauff, loc. cit.)*

⁴⁹ In his verses *Entsagung der Politik* (1793) D. N. L., 78, p. 424.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 65.

⁵¹ Quoted by Ad. Strodtmann in Neue Monatshefte f. Dichtkunst und Kritik, Vol. I., p. 225 ff.

Schubart

Another martyr to the cause of liberty, similar to the Moser pair, was Christoph Daniel Friedrich Schubart, an admirer of Klopstock and a model for Schiller, who on the whole follows out Klopstock's style in a popularized form. He criticizes the foreign influence, the lack of virile, independent patriotism in Germany,⁵² claims that the country is in a state of political somnolence, which, he hopes, will prove to be only a noonday nap,⁵³ and predicts a thorogoeing change in the political system of Europe, especially in Germany.⁵⁴ Altho a profound admirer of both Joseph II. and Leopold II. and still a serious believer in the legend of the Empire, he realizes fully the incompetency of the imperial diet and of the Imperial Court of Justice. He expresses the wish:⁵⁵ "May the spirit of God guide the worthy men, that their arguments take effect as if they were divine lightning, so that our Gothic, formal, labyrinthine, unphilosophical, often un-Christian system of legal procedure, which extends beyond the span of our own lives and lacks the spirit and the warmth of life, may at length be abolished. I wish, too, that my dear Fatherland might learn to act more and to write less." In a poem *Der Reichsadler*⁵⁶ he explains the fact that the German coat of arms contains a two-headed eagle by reference to Emperor Joseph II. and King Frederick of Prussia. Unfortunately, however, they are at odds, he says:

*Was eine Kralle packt, packt auch die andere Kralle;
Drum zerren sic so jämmerlich
O Vaterland, wic daurst du mich!*

v. Thümmel.

Moritz August v. Thümmel considers the Empire in a much lighter vein and holds up to ridicule only certain phases of it.

⁵² In the *Vaterlandschronik, Jahrgang 1787, Gesammelte Schr.*, Vol. 8.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 121.

He satirizes, for example, the incompetency of the imperial army in the lines *Auf einen Rekruten zur Reichsarmee*,⁵⁷ a jocose epitaph on a recruit who might well have attained as much glory as his colonel, had the fool not died of fright! General conditions in the Empire, too, especially such as had prevailed formerly but still held good, were subjected to Thümmel's sarcasm. A *Colloquy*⁵⁸ written in a humorous vein, is a good instance of this tendency. One of the speakers, wishing to become a Teutonic knight, is questioned by a friend as to his eligibility on the score of old family traditions. He answers that his family can be classed among the oldest, most venerable in the Holy Roman Empire, and that one of his ancestors belonged to the band that murdered Emperor Albrecht. "That, I think, ought to establish my place in the ranks of the most honored aristocrats of the land!" he proudly adds.

C. and F. L. Stolberg.

Like Schubart, the Stolberg brothers, Christian and Friedrich Leopold, were staunch patriots possessed of strong national feeling. Both members of the Klopstockian circle at Göttingen, they were well versed in the patriotic commonplaces of their creed. Especially Friedrich Leopold was happy in expressing these sentiments. His ideals were Tell, Hermann, Klopstock, Brutus, Timoleon and Luther.⁵⁹ On many occasions he mourns over Germany's ignominy,⁶⁰ expresses hate against France,⁶¹ and in *Die Insel*⁶² he speaks of the labyrinths of contemporary jurisprudence as well as the would-be politicians who expound impracticable theories. At one time⁶³ he speaks of the jealousy and megalomania of the German states in their opposition to the Emperor and the Empire, and the

⁵⁷ *Göttinger Musenalmanach*, 1771. *Sämmtl. Werke*, Leipzig, 1839, Vol. 8, p. 31.

⁵⁸ *Sämmtl. Werke*, Vol. 8, p. 61.

⁵⁹ *Gesammelte Werke*, I., pp. 18-19.

⁶⁰ *Rundgesang*, *ibid.*, pp. 348-351. *An Carl, Freiherrn v. Hompesch*, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 81, etc.

⁶¹ *Die Westhunnen*, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 119 ff.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Vol. 3, p. 231.

⁶³ September 18, 1800—Joh. Janssen: *Friedrich Graf v. Stolberg*, p. 333.

lack of character on the part of the people as prime causes for the degeneration of the country. However, when the Empire was finally dissolved, his hate for the French and his veneration of pristine conditions prompted him to write:⁶⁴ *Kaiser Franz ist also nicht mehr unser Kaiser, unser altes Reich ist aufgelöst. Ich weiss, wie gleichgültig viele Deutsche dabei bleiben und wie vieles sich sagen liess von der Veraltung unserer ehrenwürdigen Verfassung. Man wird bald gewahr werden, welchen Schritt der zerstörende Geist der Zeit durch Auflösung des Reichs gewann!*

Lichtenberg and Pfeffel.

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg and Gottlieb Conrad Pfeffel, the former in his aphorisms, the latter in his fables, frequently reveal a satirical vein. Several times Lichtenberg directs his shafts against the juridical proceedings of the time in Germany. "I wonder what would happen," he slyly says,⁶⁵ "if the news suddenly came from heaven that the Lord had decided to send a commission of plenipotentiary angels down to earth to travel around in Europe, in order to settle important legal cases, for which there is no judge here below except the right of the stronger? How many a state official would in that case prefer to request most graciously a leave of absence, in order to attend a whale-fishing party or to breathe the pure Cape Horn air, rather than remain in office!" On another occasion he applies the Horatian *nonum prematur in annum* to German legal procedure,⁶⁶ adding that cases so long delayed are usually handled less efficiently than those decided with promptitude. Pfeffel resembles Lichtwer in his tendencies. Both are fable writers with strong satirical leanings. The attitude of the former is well exemplified in the poem *Die Reichsgeschichte der Tiere*,⁶⁷ which relates how the animal ruler gradually degenerated from the position of champion of the weak, the op-

⁶⁴ August 22, 1806. *Op. cit.*, p. 358.

⁶⁵ *Politische Bemerkungen*, D. N. L., 141, p. 142.

⁶⁶ *Vermischte Schriften*, Bd. II., S. 44.

⁶⁷ D. N. L., 73, p. 79.

pressed, to a plundering tyrant. In a general way this composition sketches the imperial degeneration in Germany.

Schiller.

Schiller was no enemy of the Empire. As a poet gifted with a romantic breadth of vision, he gloried in the erstwhile splendor of his country. The first stanza of *Der Graf von Hapsburg*, in which the coronation feast of Rudolf I. is described, furnishes a typical instance of this. A composition which unfortunately remained in fragmentary form, a mere sketch, the so-called *Centenary Poem*⁶⁸ reveals the same sentiments. It owes its inception to a suggestion which Göschen made early in 1801, but it was never completed, because Schiller realized the impossibility and impropriety of a paean on the Holy Roman Empire at that time. Some completed fragments of it, however, are noteworthy, as for example the lines:

*Stürzte auch in Kriegesflammen
Deutschlands Kaiserreich zusammen,
Deutsche Grösse bleibt bestehn.*⁶⁹

and the verses:

*Finster zwar und grau vor Jahren,
Aus den Zeiten der Barbaren
Stammt der Deutschen altes Reich.
Doch lebendge Blumen grünen
Ueber gotischen Ruinen.*⁷⁰

In *Wilhelm Tell* Schiller makes a careful distinction between the Empire and the Archduchy of Austria. The fact that the Swiss hold their land directly and solely from the Emperor, the highest lord in Christendom (Act 1, Sc. 2), is emphasized. Similarly the masons in Act 1, Sc. 3 express willingness to salute the imperial crown, but have no love or respect for the

⁶⁸ Cf. Sauer, *Die deutschen Säculardichtungen*, in *Deutsche Literaturdenkmale des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Vol. 91, pp. cxliii and 189 ff.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

"Austrian hat." Rudenz in Act 2, Sc. 1, ridicules the thought that the Empire will protect the Swiss cantons, because the former cannot even defend itself against the growing might of Austria, and the Emperor's⁷¹ word is no more reliable in this case than when given to the imperial cities. Stauffacher (II., 2) calls attention to the fact that the Swiss chose voluntarily the protection afforded them by the Empire and emphasizes their independent affiliation. The delegates at the Rütli decide that it is useless to await justice from the Emperor, since he has no time for them, and they propose to seek it themselves. The questions of Walther Tell (III., 3) and the answers of his father, finally, tend to show that the Germans were not happy under the imperial government.

In such an essay as the *History of the Thirty Years' War* the author can, of course, hardly introduce effective satire. However, he well recognizes in the work the weaknesses and shortcomings of the seventeenth century Empire. The title of Emperor he calls a relic of despotic Rome, a conception of absolute sovereignty, which was in ridiculous contrast to the rest of German public law, but was fatuously defended by the jurists and the friends of despotism.⁷² The greatness of the Emperor in Wallenstein's day, says Schiller,⁷³ was due to Wallenstein himself, so that after the latter had fallen, the ruler again sank back into his nothingness. Furthermore Schiller rightly claims⁷⁴ that the Empire itself was by virtue of its disunity its own worst internal enemy, a disorganized and moribund structure.

The well known tirade of the Capucinian monk in the latter part of *Wallenstein's Lager* contains the following lines:

*Und das römische Reich—dass Gott erbarm!
Sollte jetzt heissen römisch Arm.*

⁷¹ Schiller considers Rudolf I. as virtual Emperor, altho the latter never received the title. Thruout the play repeated reference is, of course, made to his reign.

⁷² Bellermann, *Schillers Werke*, VII., pp. 47-48, 1. Teil, 1. Buch.

⁷³ 1. Teil, 2. Buch, *ibid.*, p. 138.

⁷⁴ Introduction to Third Book, *ibid.*, p. 212.

As was pointed out by Boxberger in the *Archiv für Literaturgeschichte*⁷⁵ as early as 1872, and as the correspondence of Schiller and Goethe in October, 1798, shows,⁷⁶ the source for this invective is a book of the seventeenth century preacher Abraham a Santa Clara entitled *Reimb dich oder ich Liss dich, etc.*, to which Goethe first called Schiller's attention. Especially the section *Auff Auff Ihr Christen* served Schiller as a model for his denunciatory address. There we read for example:⁷⁷ *Von vielen Jahren hero ist das Römische Reich schier Römisch Arm worden durch stätte Krieg . . .; Elsass ist ein Elendsass worden durch lauter Krieg; der Rhein-Strohm ist ein Peyn-Strohm worden durch lauter Krieg und andere Länder in Elender kehrt worden durch lauter Krieg.* This excellent quip at the expense of the Empire, then, was not original with Schiller but is fully one hundred years older. Even its author, however, who has often been depicted as a merciless scoffer by those who know him but slightly, elsewhere shows respect for the Empire.⁷⁸

Other references to the Empire in *Wallenstein* can be referred to only briefly. In the *Lager*⁷⁹ the Second Chasseur claims that Emperor Ferdinand secured his army only by virtue of its fidelity to Wallenstein. An argument ensues. The majority of the soldiers, among them the Trumpeter and the Chasseur, call Wallenstein their supreme lord, while the First Arquebusier confesses allegiance to the Emperor. When he claims that the Emperor pays the troops, he is, however, sarcastically answered by the Trumpeter (ll. 880 ff.):

*Das leugn' ich Ihm, sieht Er, ins Angesicht,
Wer uns nicht zahlt, das ist der Kaiser!*

Illo makes a similar statement in *Die Piccolomini*, Act 1, Sc. 1 (ll. 58 ff.):

⁷⁵ Vol. II., pp. 159–178.

⁷⁶ Jonas Briefe, Vol. 5., p. 447 et passim.

⁷⁷ In the Salzburg, 1687, ed., p. 16.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25, he calls Emperor Charles V. an Austrian Hercules and recounts his deeds of prowess. *Ibid.*, p. 27, he speaks of "most worthy Germany."

⁷⁹ 11. Auftritt, ll. 710 ff.

*Der Kaiser gibt uns nichts—vom Herzog
Kommt alles, was wir hoffen, was wir haben.*

and Buttler says in the same play, Act 1, Sc. 2 (ll. 255 ff.) :

*Vom Wallenstein
Erhielten wir den Kaiser erst zum Herrn,
Er knüpft uns, er allein, an diese Fahnen.*

In the *Tod*, Wallenstein calls the imperial dignity “the highest thing in the world” (Act 2, Sc. 2, l. 837); Buttler bitterly ridicules Octavio’s suggestion that the Austrian emperors ever show gratitude to those in their service (Act 2, Sc. 6, l. 1099); Deveroux, finally, expresses a similar thought (Act 5, Sc. 2, l. 3250).⁸⁰

Goethe.

The fact that Goethe spent the greater part of his childhood in and around Frankfurt, the city which had come to be regarded as a center of imperial activities, the city in which the later emperors, Roman only in name, went thru the antiquated formalities of coronation, had a great influence on the poet from his earliest youth until the very time of his death. He was afforded many an opportunity to admire the poetic lustre and the romantic splendor that imperial traditions cast about them. But his education in this respect did not remain one-sided, for he comprehended even at an immature age the rottenness and incohesiveness of the Empire. He saw the treasured Golden Bull in his native city, but soon learned to understand its antiquated nature. In the Seven Years’ War he was an admirer and partisan of Frederick the Great, and as a student in Strassburg he could say nothing good of the imperial constitution,⁸¹ but on the contrary attributed the insults that the Empire had suffered, as for example the occupation of Alsace by the French, to the weakness of the government. Much has been said and written in regard to Goethe’s apathy

⁸⁰ Illo is alleged once to have used in actual life words similar to those put into Deveroux’ mouth.

⁸¹ *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, 3. Theil, 11. Buch, Weimar ed., 28, p. 56.

on the subject of contemporary politics. The poet has been criticized again and again for his alleged quietism and in some quarters has been called even unpatriotic and cold-blooded in regard to his native land. Altho many of the charges frequently brought forth against him are untrue and others again bear the earmarks of exaggeration, Goethe's attitude of disinterest cannot wholly be explained away. It may, however, be motivated much in the same manner as the similar attitude of Lessing and other writers of the time was accounted for.⁸²

Satirical thrusts at the Empire are fairly numerous in his works. As early as in the *Urfaust*, in the scene in *Auerbachs Keller*, Frosch sings the well-known lines on the Holy Roman Empire, which is on the point of falling to pieces, and is interrupted by a strong protest on the part of Brander in regard to the tiresomeness of political songs and the futility of engaging in politics.⁸³ This incident was incorporated into the edition of the completed First Part. It expresses the feeling of the time in general and may be considered the *locus classicus* of satire upon the Empire. Besides, it reveals the attitude of contempt which the people of Leipzig assumed toward those "from the Empire."⁸⁴ By virtue of the great amount of satire against the Holy Roman Empire, spread by literature and tradition at the time,⁸⁵ a peculiar notion had gained way, especially in those parts of Germany that no longer owed immediate suzerainty to the Emperor, to the effect that the subjects of the

⁸² His sentiment *ein politisch Lied! ein leidig Lied!* is proverbial. Wieland also quotes it in a letter to Sophie de La Roche, *Auswahl Denkwürdiger Briefe*, I., p. 157. Goethe himself repeats it to Johanna Fahlmer, Feb. 19, 1776. Cf. also for a similar thought *Tag- u. Jahreshefte zum Jahr 1804—Jubiläumsausgabe*, 30, p. 400. Cf. finally Kurt Jahn: *Goethes Stellung zur Geschichte und Literaturgeschichte*.

⁸³ *Auerbachs Keller* in U. F., II. 8 ff. Goethe's mother referred to this song again in a letter of Oct. 10, 1805 (*Schriften d. Goethe Gesellschaft*, 4, p. 287), saying that at the time of writing it was more applicable than ever.

⁸⁴ Cf., *ibid.*, I. 80.

⁸⁵ So common had this form of satire become and so general was its appeal that J. D. Falk in a humorous poem *Vom Mond und von seiner Mutter* even compares the crescent of a waning moon to an emaciated tailor who has been a journeyman in the Holy Roman Empire. *Grotesken und Naivetäten auf d. Jahr 1806*, p. 106.

Empire, in the restricted sense, displayed crass stupidity. Goethe himself had already referred to it in a letter to his sister Cornelia of October 12–14, 1767,⁸⁶ and in another to Friederike Oeser of November 6, 1768.⁸⁷

In conjunction with the song of Frosch and the retort of Brander a farce of Hans Sachs entitled *Historia: Die geschicht keyser Maximiliani löblicher gedecktnuss mit dem alchanisten*, 1568,⁸⁸ seems to be of interest. The farce in question relates how an alchemist once visited Maximilian's court at Wels and after an interview with the Emperor was given a room in which to practise his hocus-pocus. One day he suddenly disappeared, and in his workshop was found a lump of gold inscribed with the words:

*O keyser Maximilian
Wellicher disc kunste kan,
Sicht dich nochs römisch reich nit an,
Dass er dir solt zu gnaden gahn.*

When one considers the fact that in another connection Schröer

⁸⁶ Goethe Jb., VII., p. 69: *draussen bei Euch* (i. e., *im Reich*) *residirt die Dummheit ganz feste noch.*

⁸⁷ Hirzel, D. j. G. Other examples are plentiful in the literature of the time. Cf. the satirical poem of Falk: *Die Schmausereien* (in *Göttinger Musenalmanach auf 1797*, published again 1799):

*O wiss', im heil'gen Röm'schen Reiche
Von Wien bis Potsdam braucht man minder Kopf als Bänche.*

Cf. also the poem of J. F. Ratschky, *Melchior Striegel*, ed. 1799. A tutor is chosen for young Melchior (p. 37):

denn Wunderhold

*(So hiess der Mann) hatt' im ultima Thule
Des Römischen Reichs auf einer Schule
Der Pädagogik das neue System
Kunstmässig erlernt, wie man ganz bequem
Aus Ignoranten in wenigen Monden
Alwisser macht, die Paris und London
Mit ihren berühmten Akademien
Hervorzubringen umsonst sich bemühn.*

Bodmer in his satirical poem *Die Larve* (1758), quoted by Ebeling I., p. 198 ff. furnishes another example:

*Die Kreise des heiligen römischen Reichs
Deutscher Zunge, sie alle, und mit einhelliger Dummheit
Hatten mich für Horatz genommen. . . .*

⁸⁸ Keller-Goetze, 16, pp. 422–426.

proved that Goethe was familiar with this poem,⁸⁹ and when one remembers that the poet's attention was called to Sachs very early in life, it seems at least possible that the work of the mastersinger-cobbler may have been one of the factors that influenced Goethe to write his satirical lines. Of still greater importance for Goethe's song are the verses of Jörg Busch (1551), quoted in Chapter III., that appear in Chapter VIII. of Fischart's *Geschichtklitterung*. Especially noteworthy is the fact that in Fischart as in Goethe the song is introduced in the course of a drinking bout.

Otto Marbach⁹⁰ is practically the only critic to note a relation between the "political song" of *Auerbachs Keller* and the political satire of Part II. of *Faust*. Nevertheless it is patent that in the two cases Goethe was dealing with the same subject, and there is every reason to believe that he was conscious of the fact. The condition of the Empire had always aroused his keen interest, especially after his stay at Wetzlar, and so he incorporated into *Auerbachs Keller*, one of the earliest scenes of *Faust*, some evidences of this interest, intending at the same time, no doubt, to elaborate the theme later in the *Zweiter Teil*, which, we know, formed part of his plan almost from the very beginning. Satirical treatment of the Empire, then, is one of the several interests which Goethe carried over from Part I. to Part II.

Up to very recent times most critics of *Faust* were content to consider the many obscure political allusions of the first and fourth acts of Part II. as referring in the main to the erstwhile Holy Roman Empire and to detect only here and there a reference to later events. However, beginning with Baumgart and much more so with the American critic Henry Wood, in his *Fauststudien*, the tendency to read into *Faust II.* more of the contemporary has come into vogue.⁹¹ It is on the whole a very sensible departure from the older custom, for one can hardly imagine Goethe in the third decade of the nineteenth

⁸⁹ Schröer, *Faust*, II., pp. xix and xx.

⁹⁰ Goethes *Faust*, Stuttgart, 1881.

⁹¹ Cf. also J. Goebel in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Apr., 1917, p. 195 ff.

century composing to the exclusion of everything else satire against an evil that had ceased to exist two decades before.⁹² Wood is quite correct in calling the Empire of Part II. half medieval and half modern,⁹³ medieval in makeup and outward appearance, but modern in its hidden tendencies and idiosyncracies. He points out many instances of contemporary satire, some of them unmistakable, others doubtful, and still others rather far-fetched. Since they refer entirely to a period subsequent to 1806, however, they cannot be considered in the present work. Only such references as point back to conditions before that date will be touched upon at all.

The Emperor depicted by Goethe might be considered a faithful copy of many a Germanic ruler of the middle ages. Goethe himself described him to Eckermann, October 1, 1827, as "a prince possessed of every possible capacity for losing his crown." Furthermore conditions described in Act 4 (ll. 10261, etc.) are reminiscent of imperial days and the portrayal of the enfeoffment of the various princes by the Emperor contains references to the Golden Bull. Such instances, however, make up only the frame of the picture, as it were. This frame, as we shall call it, is medieval in spirit; the picture itself deals with the Germany of Goethe's old age. Yet why should Goethe have adhered to the Romano-Germanic frame at all? At first blush such a procedure seems rather uncalled for. It may be explained partly by his ever-present interest in the old Empire, partly by another reason that has already been hinted at. After having included in *Auerbachs Keller* the satirical song, and after having portrayed the medieval Empire in *Götz*, he quite probably made up his mind to expand the subject in Part II. of his great drama. But when he finally set to work on the latter half of *Faust*, the Holy Roman Empire was a thing of the past and no longer offered a fitting theme for satire. However, rather than abandon the favorite subject entirely, the poet used it as a means for presenting more timely and more up-to-date problems, as a frame for a new picture.

⁹² Cf. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp., 144-145.

At one time to be sure, he had even thought specifically of Maximilian and his court at Augsburg, but had wisely dropped this attempt at definite localization. He finally contented himself with a portrayal of the general situation thruout the Empire, with its internal anarchy, its incohesiveness, its insistence on obsolete forms and customs, and its particularism, and constructed upon this foundation a picture of Germany in 1820-1830.⁹⁴

If it were necessary to quote another case in which Goethe shows interest in the medieval history of Germany, his play *Götz von Berlichingen* could be cited. Here again the author depicts certain phases of the decadence of the Empire, with particular reference to the age of Maximilian, "the last of the knights," a time when the young Luther was preparing for his great life work, when the juridical machinery of the country was impeded and hampered by the introduction of the new Roman law, and when the lower classes were oppressed and harassed by their superiors. But Goethe's subjective mind could hardly grasp objectively the picture presented by the sources, Pistorius, Datt, Möser and Götz himself. Consequently he introduced many of his own impressions gained by observation of contemporary conditions, so that the Empire of *Götz* is a strange but undisturbing composite picture of Germany at two distinct stages of its development. The Bishop gives a drastic description of conditions (Act 1, *Bischöflicher Palast*) and calls the Empire a den for murderers. Weislingen's remark (Act 2, Adelheid-Weislingen scene): "The Emperor requests our help against the Turks, so it's only fair that he in turn should assist us" is significant and characteristic of the time. The incident of the peasant marriage in Act 2 is an excellent bit of satire at the expense of the dilatory courts and the pettifogging jurists. Maximilian himself reveals the essence of the trouble (Act 3, Sc. 1), when he speaks

⁹⁴ Cf. ll. 4825 ff. For the factiousness in the Empire cf. ll. 4845 ff. The procession of the elephant bearing Prudence and Victory and followed by Hope and Fear, enchain'd, reminds one in a general way of similar conceptions of Hans Sachs. In l. 10272 the Empire is compared with an inebrate.

to Weislingen of the egoism of the princes.⁹⁵ The First Officer in Act 3 (*Lager der Reichsexekution*) jocosely predicts that his men will be reluctant about risking their lives to capture Götz for the sake of the Empire and the Emperor. Yet it would be wrong to say that *Götz* reveals any disrespect for the Emperor. Both the speech of Weislingen, for example, (Act 1, *Du siehst die Fürsten an wie der Wolf*) and the answer of Götz show only affection and esteem for him, altho emphasizing his helplessness. Götz himself proves his respect for the Emperor on several occasions, in the answer to the Trumpeter (Act 3, *Jaxthausen*) and in the impressive scene (Act 3, *Saal*) in which, beleagured on all sides and under the imperial ban, he proposes a toast to the Emperor, altho deeming himself happier than the former, who is the soul of so crippled a body. In Act 4, in the *Rathaus* scene, Götz again shows love for the Emperor,⁹⁶ and in Act 5 (*Hauptmanns Zelt*) he laments the fact that the gypsy robbers are the only ones who protect the Emperor's subjects. On the other hand he becomes satirical (Act 4, *Rathaus*) when the councillor urges the populace to attack him. The medieval conception of the eternity of the Empire is well emphasized (Act 3, *Saal*) by the confidence that Götz expresses in its future.

Many years later, in a *Maskenzug* of 1818,⁹⁷ Goethe wrote of *Götz*:

*Die Schreckenstage, die ein Reich erfährt,
Wo jeglicher befiehlt und keiner hört,
Wo das Gesetz verstummt, der Fürst entflieht,
Und niemand Rat und niemand Rettung sieht,
Die schildr' ich nicht.*

Altho these lines were composed over forty years after the play, their claim may be considered accurate, for in *Götz* the

⁹⁵ This passage is taken almost verbatim from the *Autobiography of Götz*, Bieling ed., p. 55; in the *Urgötz* the description is still more drastic; similarly to Herder, Goethe here calls Germany a morass. Act 3 of *Urgötz* begins with a scene at the Diet of Augsburg, in which Maximilian vehemently asserts his rights. The later version does not contain this scene.

⁹⁶ His sentiments here are similar to those expressed by Luther. Weimar ed. of Luther, 30³, pp. 331-332.

⁹⁷ Weimar ed., 16, p. 281.

author considers only certain aspects of the theme, especially the so-called *Landfriede*, which Goethe knew as the Imperial Court of Justice, and the imperial army.⁹⁸

In the course of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* Goethe offers a much more minute, powerful picture of his times. For example, the reminiscences that he gives in Part I, of his youth, contain many references to imperial history. Notable among these is the depiction in Book I. of the *Römersaal*, the walls of which were so covered with portraits of the Emperors, that room remained for only one more picture. Still more important and instructive, however, is the detailed description in Book V. of the coronation of Emperor Joseph II. at Frankfurt in 1765. On the whole it shows sympathy with, and interest in, the proceedings and in some respects may be called a poetic glorification of the ceremony, such as an aging poet might write in the case of any incident that had made a deep impression on him in his childhood. It is of considerable interest to compare with Goethe's description another coronation account by Karl Heinrich Ritter v. Lang. As an eye witness, he describes the festivities incident to the inauguration of Joseph II.'s successor, Leopold II., in 1790. His attitude is diametrically opposed to that of Goethe, for he gives us a very satirical and deprecative account of the ceremonies, describing them as unworthy of the most beggarly ruler.⁹⁹ He relates an absurd quarrel that arose over the question as to who was to serve the thirty-seventh dish at the imperial banquet, compares the bare, unadorned throne to a hen's roost (p. 167), and describes the imperial vestments as resembling cast-off clothing (p. 166). Especially the custom of roasting the ox and serving him to the Emperor is ridiculed (p. 168); and when the plundering rabble upsets the temporary kitchen, v. Lang sees in the fall of the structure a symbol of the impending ruin of the Empire.

⁹⁸ The review in the *Frankfurter Gelchrte Anzeigen* of 1773 shows that the play deals with contemporary conditions more than with the sixteenth century.

⁹⁹ *Memoiren*, 2. ed., Vol. I., pp. 163-170.

Other references in Goethe's autobiographical work will be briefly mentioned. In the seventh book of Part II. of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* there was originally an additional passage dealing with political conditions and supplementing the literary observations.¹⁰⁰ The section in the eleventh book referring to Goethe's Strassburg conversations on politics has already been mentioned. The twelfth book contains the description of the pitiful conditions prevailing at the Wetzlar court,¹⁰¹ with its thousands of undecided cases, which were settled at the rate of 60 per year, and in this connection Goethe speaks of the Empire as a diseased organism, kept alive only by a miracle. He says¹⁰² that it was impossible to forget that one was sojourning at Wetzlar and that one could notice there better than anywhere else the morbid symptoms in the body politic, especially the selfishness of the princes. At the end of the thirteenth book and again in the fifteenth book Goethe pays his tribute to Justus Möser.¹⁰³ But since *Dichtung und Wahrheit* was written some years after the collapse of the Empire, the passages here quoted have only a general historical value.

Allusions in other works of Goethe to the Empire are of more immediate interest. In *Jery und Bätely*, for instance, Thomas, who has retired from active service as a soldier, meets his old friend Jery, hears of his love affair and decides to assist him in it. But after being rudely treated by Bätely, he seeks revenge and another chance to speak to her. He drives his cattle, who are on the way to Milan, into the meadow of Bätely's father. The latter soon appears and demands an explanation. Thomas boldly answers:¹⁰⁴

*In Polen und im Röm'schen Reich
Geht's auch nicht besser her.*

Similarly the humorous poem to Kestner of January, 1773,¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Weimar ed., 27, *Lesarten*, p. 389.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 28, p. 132 ff.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 238 and 318.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 12, p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5, pp. 62 f.

beginning *Wenn dem Papa sein Pfeifchen schmeckt*, contains a sly allusion to the troubles of the Empire, and the prose introduction to these verses speaks of *das hl. Römisch Reichs Gerechtigkeits Purifikations Wesen*.¹⁰⁶ The state of affairs at the courts of justice is hinted at in the play *Die Aufgeregten*, Act I., Sc. 7, where Breme, speaking of a case pending trial at Wetzlar, says that no news has come of its progress and that if any had come, it would not have amounted to much. In explanation he adds that the litigation in question is already forty years old, and that there is no hope of its immediate settlement.¹⁰⁷ Later it appears¹⁰⁸ that because of the unpardonable procrastination of the imperial court even the public highways are being neglected. The prologue, finally, of the *Neueröffnetes moralisch-politisches Puppenspiel* (1774)¹⁰⁹ refers to the Emperor in a disparaging way and asserts that all Empires are transitory.

The dissolution of the old Empire made but a slight impression on Goethe's mind, it seems. Only the following passage appears, without further comment, in the *Tag- und Jahreshefte*:¹¹⁰ *Indessen war der Deutsche Rheinbund geschlossen und seine Folgen leicht zu übersehen; auch fanden wir bei unserer Rückreise (i. e., von Karlsbad) durch Hof in den Zeitungen die Nachricht, das Deutsche Reich sei aufgelöst.* Remarks, such as quoted above from Stolberg, are missing. In fact, says Wilhelm Bode,¹¹¹ a quarrel between a coachman and a servant engaged the interest of Goethe and Riemer more than did the political news.

Klinger.

The references that Klinger makes to political events and conditions, found mostly in his philosophical novels, are to

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, *Briefe*, 2, p. 54.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 18, pp. 19 f.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35, Act 2, Sc. 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 16, pp. 3-5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 35, p. 268.

¹¹¹ *Goethe im deutschen Zusammenbruch 1806*, in *Stunden mit Goethe* (1907), pp. 13-46.

some extent veiled and uncertain. Especially is this the case in his first work of the kind, *Geschichte vom goldenen Hahn* (1785), which he later revised and published as *Sahir, Evas Erstgeborener im Paradies* (1797). The once innocent but now polluted Circassians remind one in more than one respect of the author's contemporaries. Their stagnant constitution, for instance,¹¹² the absence of politicians among them,¹¹³ the easy-going nature of their ruler (p. 31), and the egoism of their councillors (p. 42) seem to have been emphasized by Klinger for a distinct satirical purpose. In fact, his irony becomes evident when he expressly compares the love of country, warmth, frankness, concern for the national welfare, and patriotism displayed by the Circassian delegates with "similar noble motives" of councillors in the Holy Roman Empire (p. 42). The golden cock, too, a peculiar symbolical invention of Klinger, may well contain hidden allusions, political and otherwise. It is even possible that Klinger had the Golden Bull in mind when he conceived the idea; for the cock seems to be a sort of *sine qua non* with reference to the welfare of the state (pp. 6-8).

In the *Geschichte eines Deutschen der neuesten Zeit* (1798), which has been called an answer to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, political allusions are more apparent. In the main they relate to the pitiful condition of Germany. The thought that Germans have no fatherland is vehemently spurned¹¹⁴ and all patriots are called upon to prove their attachment to their country (X., 112). The novel *Der Weltmann und der Dichter* (1798), too, sometimes described as a reply to *Tasso*, and characterized by Rieger as the best of Klinger's novels, because it gives so vivid a picture of contemporary conditions, is valuable from a political point of view. It depreciates the ability and good qualities of statesmen, especially in the Germany of the Holy Roman Empire (XI., 63), and similarly to the previous work, laments the fate of Germany. "Air and dreams are still exempted from taxation in our dear Fatherland!" exclaims the man of the world (p. 125). Klinger's object in

¹¹² *Philos. Romane*, XII., p. 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 4. Here Klinger makes it clear that he is writing satire.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. IX., p. 153. Cf. also Vol. X., p. 69.

these works, it seems, was to show that altho he had already been living for many years in far-off Russia, he still retained an active interest in political and social questions at home.

Germania in Jahre 1795.

Very important and successful satire at the expense of the imperial Diet, with its stiff, formal proceedings and its dragging methods appeared in an anonymous pamphlet entitled *Germania im Jahre 1795*. The patron saint of Germany, Germania, suddenly appears in the electoral chamber of the Diet at Regensburg and demands the convocation of the whole general Diet, in order that she may announce the will of the gods. Baron v. Strauss answers her request in the most stilted, unnatural language of the chancellery that he can command for the occasion, informing her that first she will have to go thru the endless routine customary in such cases. When she insists on immediate action, he finally acquiesces, on condition that she assume all responsibility for the unprecedented procedure. Incidentally he informs her that the hall in which the so-called process of correlation and relation takes place is in a dangerously dilapidated condition¹¹⁵ and adds that it has been so ever since the time of the late Emperor Joseph II., who had expressed the hope that a falling in of the roof might hasten the recess of the Diet. Another passage in the same work ridicules the imperial army and describes the Diet as engaged in weighty deliberations on such questions as: Could the imperial army not wage war without bread and powder? Could the forts not be protected with airpipes rather than with cannon? In addition the dilatoriness of the various estates in granting military appropriations is satirized. One estate prefers to await the decision of the others, another votes as little money as possible, still another defers action pending the resolution of the Hanoverian council, which in turn must await instructions from London. In short, the author decides, the French will have to

¹¹⁵ Biedermann, *Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert*, I., pp. 29-30, quotes the passage in question.

be requested to postpone their hostile campaign, until the momentous questions before the Diet have been solved.

Jean Paul Richter.

Among the poets and men of letters who lived in the latter half of the eighteenth and during the first decades of the nineteenth centuries, we find many admirers of Napoleon. Not only Goethe and Heine can be mentioned in this connection, but also Jean Paul Richter. The latter greets the great French general as the savior and guardian angel of Germany¹¹⁶ and desires a league of princes and a long peace, protected by him. This general feeling of awe which Napoleon aroused in certain quarters of Germany may be explained to some extent as hero-worship, yet in part, at least, it followed naturally out of the political situation. It represents simply the recognition, on the part of Germans, of true greatness in Napoleon, and the subconscious desire for a similar leader east of the Rhine. Jean Paul well expresses this need of Germany when soon after the dissolution of the Empire he calls his own age a builder's scaffold and refers to the preceding period as having been even worse than a scaffold.¹¹⁷

Romanticists — A. W. and F. Schlegel.

Like Jean Paul the earlier Romanticists, too, still came under the influence of the old regime in Germany. But they were fortunately free from the prejudices of their predecessors. In their strong expression of individuality they protested against the patronizing, bureaucratic governmental mechanism of the absolute state.¹¹⁸ Expression of nationalism and the pursuit of politics engrossed their attention for a time. Friedrich Schlegel compares the "genuine state," that is, Greek republicanism, with the political bungling of his own day and shows

¹¹⁶ Nerrlich: *Jean Paul, Sein Leben und seine Werke*, p. 514.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 515.

¹¹⁸ Cf. A. W. Schlegel's *Fasnachtsspiel vom alten und neuen Jahrhundert*. Böcking, *Werke*, II., p. 154. In an epigram, *ibid.*, II., p. 235, he ridicules the *Weilandheiligenrömischenreichsdeutschernationsperioden*.

in his early works a lively interest in political theories.¹¹⁹ Hardenberg, too, studied the subject diligently. The fall of the old Empire, however, was to most of the Romanticists no cause for regret. Rather did they greet it as a favorable omen, a step toward the consummation of a German national state.¹²⁰

Görres.

The interest that Josef Görres took in politics dates, on the whole, from a period subsequent to the year 1806.¹²¹ Of importance, however, for our purpose is a satirical speech, *Rede, gehalten am 18. Nivose J. VI in der patriotischen Gesellschaft in Koblenz v. Bgr. J. Görres: Auf den Untergang des hl. röm. Reichs deutscher Nation.*¹²² It was written after the Peace of Campo Formio (1797) and is in the form of a mock-serious funeral address over the body of a dear friend, the Holy Roman Empire, who is reported to have deceased on December 30, 1797, the day of the surrender of Mayence, at 3 P.M. in Regensburg, at the ripe old age of 955 years 5 months and 28 days. The departed friend, *das heilige römische Reich schwer-fälligen Andenkens*, died of complete debilitation, complicated by apoplexy, but enjoyed full consciousness until the time of death, so that the last rites could be administered (p. 18). The speaker chides the Lord for having taken unto himself so soon the poor, innocent creature, which had the patience and endurance of a donkey (p. 18). A brief biographical sketch follows. At its birth (842) many portents took place, as for example the appearance of bloody dragons in the sky. The mid-

¹¹⁹ Walzel, *Friedrich Schlegels Briefe an s. Bruder August*, Nr. 82.

¹²⁰ Poetzsch, *Studien zur frühromantischen Politik- u. Geschichtsauffassung*, p. 40. Friedrich Schlegel, however, was an enthusiastic admirer of Austria. Cf. his *Histor. Vorlesungen* (1810) passim, the *Concordia* (1820), and the poem *Huldigung in Werke*, 2. Aufl. Wien, 1846, Vol. X., p. 132. Dorothea Schlegel, who was under the influence of Friedrich, expresses the same sentiment. Cf. her letter to Karoline Paulus of June 30, 1806 (Unger, p. 92), in which she regrets the humiliation of the Austrian house.

¹²¹ Uhlmann, *Jos. Görres u. d. deut. Einheits- u. Verfassungsfrage bis zum Jahre 1824.*

¹²² Schellberg, *Ausgewählte Werke*, Vol. I., p. 16 ff.

wife first discovered the child. It was reared at the court of Charles the Simple, Louis the Child and others, was nourished with the blood of heathens and tutored by the Popes. From earliest childhood it preferred to study musty old archives rather than engage in war, but was aroused to action by interest in the Catholic Church and hate of the Turks. As a reward for its services it was canonized by the Popes while still alive and called "the Holy Roman Empire." But alas! it had human failings! Its sedentary life and its religious fervor affected its health. At the time of the crusades it became insane. Frequent bleedings and a strict system of dieting palliated its infirmities without curing them, and a hectic fever took the place of its insanity. For centuries it became the victim of terrible hemorrhages, which inundated all of Europe for half a century. From these it never recovered, but gradually grew worse, until the stroke of apoplexy took it by surprise, as it was sitting over its books. It was a patient, loving father, albeit a trifle awkward.

Its last will and testament is given in detail. The French Republic is to receive the left bank of the Rhine "as a token of love." The Elector of Trèves is to be munificently rewarded for his many services with the sword of Charles the Great, while the Elector of Hanover is to receive the Imperial Stockings. The Imperial Orb, the sign of world dominion, is given to the British premier Pitt. Many other equally humorous provisions are made, as for example, that the annual income of the Emperor (13,000 florins) is to accrue to the poorhouse of Regensburg, that the imperial knights are to be supplied with horses and sent as mercenaries to Russia, and that the Imperial Court of Justice is hereafter to meet in the horns of the moon, while the Deputation of the Empire shall declare its meetings permanent and then discuss the question of eternal peace, with the proviso that each article must be discussed and passed in not less than 50,000 sessions. Further, the imperial army is to be sold to the highest bidder and the double eagle on the coat of arms is to be fed to death. The inscription on the tombstone reads:

*Von der Sense des Todes gemäht, atemlos und bleich,
Lieg hier das heilige römische Reich.
Wandrer, schleiche dich leise vorbei, du möchtest es wecken,
Und das Erstandene uns dann von neuem mit Konklusen bedecken.
Ach! Wären die Franzosen nicht gewesen,
Es würde nicht unter diesem Stein verwesen.*

Fichte.—v. Gents.—Folksong.

This obsequial address is on the whole one of the most able and most telling satirical utterances extant on the subject of the Empire. If it were fitting to speak in this connection in terms of an ascending scale, it might be said that with it German literature reached its satirical climax, as far as the Holy Roman Empire is concerned. Quotations from other authors, whose utterances are less caustic and vehement and are couched in a milder form, as for instance from Fichte,¹²³ or from the historian Friedrich von Gentz,¹²⁴ would create an anticlimax. Satirical folksongs, too, became very frequent and popular toward the end of the period. One found at Salzburg and written probably in 1805 contains the lines (Str. 2):¹²⁵

*Dem Kaiser Franz bleiben wir treu
Bis ganz zugrund geht's Römisches Reich.
Habt nur acht! es fehlt nicht weit;
Sonst kommt die letzte Zeit.*

and another from Upper Bavaria, also of 1805,¹²⁶ ridicules Francis II. as a lackland (Str. 16 and 17). A third work, representing a conversation in Elysium between Frederick II.,

¹²³ *Reden an die deutsche Nation*, 14. Rede, Sämmtl. Werke, 3. Abt., 2. Band, p. 486; *ibid.*, p. 191 and p. 197.

¹²⁴ *Fragmente aus der neuesten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa*, St. Petersburg, 1806, pp. xliii., xlviij. Especially important is a memoir of Gentz dated Sept. 6, 1804, Schlesier, *Schriften*, IV., p. 23 ff. The passage in question begins: *Wir sind ein zerstückeltes Volk* and gives a rapid review of imperial history with emphasis on the misfortunes and disasters and a description of what might have occurred if the fates had been more propitious.

¹²⁵ Hartmann, III., pp. 78 ff.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86 ff.

Frederick William II. and Joseph II., makes the latter admit that the sun of Austria is sinking.¹²⁷

As was pointed out several times before, the subject by no means died out in literature simultaneously with the dissolution of the Empire. Among a countless array of references made to the Holy Roman Empire subsequent to 1806, those of Goethe, Grillparzer, Baumbach, Wedekind and Hauptmann that have been mentioned stand out. Heine, too, could be added to the list to prove that even the *επίγονοι* were impressed by the great possibilities of the theme.¹²⁸ In truth, a careful scrutiny of the modern periodicals will reveal the fact that even today the Holy Roman Empire has not been forgotten.¹²⁹ It is and ever shall be a great warning example of the political axiom that a successful state must be constructed on the principle of centralization, of honest cooperation between the various members, and of efficient government in its three essential branches. Thus it served as a useful lesson not only to the reorganizers of Germany in 1871 but to the whole world at large. If this was its mission on earth—a welcome and pleasing assumption—it has after all left behind it on earth a noble heritage.

¹²⁷ Sauer, *Säculardichtungen-Literaturdenkmale des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Nr. 91, p. 376.

¹²⁸ *Harzreise*, Elster ed., III., p. 74; *Buch le Grand*, Chap. 13, *ibid.*, p. 173; *Reise von München nach Genua*, Chap. 19, *ibid.*, p. 251; *Deutschland, ein Wintern Märchen*, Chap. 15, *ibid.*, II., p. 463, Chap. 17, *ibid.*, p. 467; *Ueber L. Börne*, I. Buch, *ibid.*, VII., p. 31. Cf. also Strodtmann's biography, II^o, p. 187. Cf. also *Salon*, Elster ed., IV., p. 72.

¹²⁹ Cf. Prof. Heyck in *Velhagen u. Klasings Monatshefte*, Jan., 1903, and Prof. Lamprecht in *Oesterr. Rundschau*, Jan.-Mar., 1915.

APPENDIX A

ENGLISH RENDERINGS OF THE LATIN AND OLD GERMAN CITATIONS

Rough prose translations of the more difficult Latin and Old German citations and titles occurring in the first four chapters are herewith submitted for the convenience of the reader who might experience difficulty with the original dialects.

CHAPTER I

Page 5, footnote 7: "And in order that the present treaty in all its points and articles may the better remain and be kept in honor and in the memory of the common man, we ordain and determine that hereafter for all eternity this our treaty shall be read . . . every year and be expressed and incorporated in said oath."

Page 13, line 6: "the emperor and monarch of all kings and princes of the earth."

— *line 9:* "We kings all owe allegiance to the Emperor, the highest king, as it were, who is the head and the leader of kings."

CHAPTER II

Page 23, line 20: "German lands are full of robbery. Courts, magistrates, coinage and tolls were once devised with honest intentions, but now they have become objects of thievery. All good measures that have ever been employed for the betterment of Christianity are now most readily violated by the highest and noblest personages."

Page 24, footnote 6: "To pass over other points, the kingdom of the Romans, which in Daniel is compared to a sword because of its singular rulership over the whole world, acquired by war and called by the Greeks a monarchy, has as a result

of so many changes, especially in our day, become the most novel empire when once it was the noblest. And so a poet says of the city, the senate and the Roman people: Barely the shadow of the great name lives. Forsooth, in passing from the city to the Greeks, from the Greeks to the Franks, from the Franks to the Lombards and then from the Lombards to the Teutonic Franks, it not only became antiquated but also gathered a sediment of filth and defects because of its very mobility, just as a bright stone which is cast hither and thither by the waters. In the very headship of the world its wretchedness is manifested, and the destruction of the headship forebodes the ruin of the whole body."

Page 24, footnote 7: "If anyone should say that the Roman Empire is not the monarch and the ruler of the whole universe in which Christ is worshipped, he is a heretic because he opposes the decree of the Church."

Page 26, line 15: "The Roman Empire will continue as long as God wishes. God has assigned to it its time and limit. May He grant that it become so great that the whole world be subservient to it, as is meet."

— *line 28:* "Just as the moon wanes when it disappears and weakens, thus, too, little is now left of you. Would God that you also might wax, so that you might resemble the moon. He who has not broken off a piece of the Roman Empire does not think that he possesses aught."

Page 27, line 2: "Every prince breaks something off, so that he may have a piece of it. Therefore it is not surprising that the Empire is bare and dismantled."

Page 28, line 19: "The Empire is hard pressed. I'll become an ape as I did in Merseburg."

— *line 25:* "I helped the king of England, who would have suffered complete destruction, had I not quickly come to his assistance. He would have been lost."

Page 29, line 4: "Don't lose heart if I should be a trifle slow in coming. Just keep me informed; after a while I'll be there."

— *line 28:* "It has been announced that the war shall be deferred until five men have assembled, as I understand,

who shall settle the war with the permission of the lords and cities. I shall name these five, so that you may know them. The first shall be a surgeon who has never perspired, mark ye well. The second one I shall here describe: a huckster who has never lied. The third I shall mention: a miller who has never stolen. The fourth I shall now name: a man who is itchy and scabby but who has never scratched himself. He will fit well into this council. The fifth shall be a gambler who travels with his gains, commits nuisances every day, but never curses."

Page 31, line 4: "The cook is well worthy of punishment if he puts too much salt into the food."

— *line 15:* "History of the Roman Empire."

— *line 17:* "The temporal sword is all corroded; the spiritual would still do its duty, if only the leaders were friendly to one another and if the princes coöperated among themselves. Thus Christianity would be free from the rout of unbelievers, but as it is, the sorrow of one man is mockery for the other."

— *line 24:* "On the struggle and battle at Granson."

— *line 27:* "Austria, you are sleeping very long. O, that the song of the birds does not awake you! You have missed early mass!"

Page 32, line 3: "A more disgraceful rout has never been recounted. Rejoice, all ye Christians, for it would have gone hard with you. If Burgundy had gained a success, the whole Roman Empire would have taken a bound. That was the object of the enterprise! Therefore the Roman Empire furnished considerable assistance, as was meet. Mark it well. I care not a rap for the friendship of those who would desert me in time of need, when first it was their intention to reinforce me."

Page 33, line 5: "God is their liege lord, Mary their liege lady. Lightly they bear on their shields the Roman Empire."

— *footnote 26:* "They have much silver and gold, too. They can give abundant pay and lie in their beds."

"Bishop of Mayence, with your poem, which you write

with your Court of Justice, you wanted to force the Confederates to join you. You got into conflict with them and were hard pressed; you had to struggle with them."

CHAPTER III

Page 35, line 6: "And altho the strength of the Empire may in itself suffice for preserving and defending the League, nevertheless the princes of the aforementioned League and their illustrious Senate in the district of Halle have begged us to confirm and to support the peace and its declaration as well as the Swabian League and the jurisdiction of the aforementioned Apostolical See."

— *footnote 6:* "Exhortation to the Empire to undertake a great campaign against the Turks."

— — — "A complaint to God over the cruel ravages of the cruel Turk and his many wars and victories."

Page 36, line 6: "Entry of His Majesty Emperor Charles V."

— *line 17:* "All Roman Emperors in order, how long each one ruled, when, what customs he observed, and how he died, from the first to the present most powerful Emperor, Charles V."

Page 38, line 8: "A pleasing colloquy of the gods on the discord of the Roman Empire."

— *line 22:* "All ye gods, the Roman Empire together with the German nation is suffering discord and strife, and if no one will appease and unite in friendship the discordant parties, so that there be peace between them, the Empire must dissolve and will no longer be able to exist."

Page 39, line 29: "I am not surprised that things go so badly and that there is discord in the Empire, since Public Weal, the bulwark of the Roman Empire, resides neither with the high nor with the lowly. Much more do I wonder that the Roman Empire has not gone to destruction many years ago."

Page 40, line 22: "The complaining herald on princes and nobility."

— *line 27:* "A pleasing colloquy of the gods on the question why there are so many bad rulers on earth."

Page 41, line 4: "As it goes with the heavenly rulers, so it is, too, with those on earth. To be sure, they have about them early and late many wise councillors, but they follow them not and are rather deceived by enviers, hypocrites and triflers and by selfish traffickers in money."

— *line 12:* "A complaint of Germany and her colloquy with the faithful Eckhart."

— *line 27:* "A colloquy with the nine muses as to who is the original cause of the unrest in Germany."

Page 42, line 21: "A colloquy of the gods against the rebellious prince Margrave Albert and other princes and cities of Germany."

Page 43, line 29: "Complaint of the free cities of the German nation, or warning to the free and imperial cities of the German nation."

Page 44, line 1: "Complaint and warning against the excessive, un-Christian power of the Pope at Rome."

— *line 4:* "How could one rule well if the Empire were full of clergynien? That's why conditions are so good in the Empire and every one enjoys justice and equality!"

— *line 8:* "Dialogue or colloquy called The Spectators."

— *line 11:* "Among their princes, too, discord and perpetual private feuds exist, whereby they destroy one another." "Can't the Emperor settle them?" "Ought he settle them when they are to his advantage? For if they did not thus destroy one another, they would be too powerful for him."

Page 45, line 5: "(I) can write to Your Electoral Highness with good reason that it has never been my intention or aim, and is not now, to slander anyone of the high or lower estates or to write, teach or preach anything that could afford a pretense for stirring up commotion, insubordination, disunion or rebellion in the Holy Empire, or for leading Christians astray, against all of which practices I have often written and preached vehemently."

— *line 21:* "Two discordant and perverse imperial edicts."

— *line 24:* "Whether soldiers can become blessed too."

Page 46, line 14: "For here you see how the wretched mortal

bag of worms, the Emperor, who is not for a single moment sure of his life, insolently boasts that he is the real highest defender of the Christian faith."

— *line 21:* "But if you do not wish to observe, and prefer to persecute, your baptismal duty and the Christian league made with Christ, then may a rogue obey you in my stead. I do not wish to blaspheme my God and to persecute His word because you wish it."

Page 47, line 22: "For so much is certain, that in Holy Scripture we can expect no more temporal events. All is done and has been fulfilled. The Roman Empire is at an end, the Turk has risen to the highest position, the splendor of the papacy is frittering away, and the earth is cracking in almost every corner, as if it were actually to break and to fall. For the fact that under our Emperor Charles this same Roman Empire is ascending a little and is becoming more powerful than it had been in many a day, suggests to me that it is the last empire and in the eyes of God similar to a light or a straw which, when it has burned entirely down and is on the point of failing, flares up as if it were now first beginning to burn, and is presently extinguished, just as Christianity is now doing with so bright a gospel."

Page 48, line 4: "So too it will be in Germany. I think that a great mist will follow the present light and that thereafter the Day of Judgment will come."

— *line 8:* "The Pope, too, has to this very day made repeated efforts to mend them and finds himself unable to restore them to their former condition. So too He (our Lord) will deal with Germany. He will take the pious unto Himself and thereupon make an end of the German land, for it has earned its punishment, and still there is no end in sight."

— *line 25:* "I do not want to play the hypocrite but tell the truth. See what a devil's strumpet rules in the Imperial Court of Justice, when the latter, a divine jewel in German lands, ought to be the one great solace of all those who suffer wrong."

Page 49, line 17: "(The German Emperor) is called Roman

Emperor, altho having no control of Rome, and at the same time he is expected to be dependent on the caprice of the Pope and his party, so that we have the name and they the land and cities, while they have constantly taken advantage of our simple-mindedness for their own aggrandizement. They call us mad Germans, who allow ourselves to be aped and befooled at their pleasure."

Page 50, line 8: "A poem in which is shown how pious Duke Henry of Brunswick is and how bad the Lutherans are."

— *line 14:* "Dialogue before the gates of heaven between Franz v. Sickingen, St. Peter and the knight St. George previous to the admission of the first-mentioned."

— *line 27:* "What is the Imperial Court of Justice?" "It is as follows: He who has been released from the lower court, the purgatory as it were, gets into hell. For I really think that no soul can be tortured more severely by the devils in hell than a wretch who falls into the hands of a procurator, an advocate and that musty crowd, for there are so many actions, exceptions, replications, rejoinders, triplications, rebutters, postponements, peremptory adjournments, that there is no hope of settlement. Blood and flesh must both be consumed. If one case in a hundred is finally settled, the litigant must seek the execution of the judgment from the kitchen master of the house of Ochsenstein . . . from such a lack of justice it follows that if a poor man has no resources with which to see this long, intolerable procedure thru, he will undertake a feud, a course of hostility, or a war."

Page 51, line 12: "We, Lucifer, without the grace of God, disturber of holy Christianity, good morals and virtues, etc."

— *line 30:* "Ha, Belial, what sayest thou? Shall such a gracious, chaste friend of the nuns arrive so quickly at great power that we poor peasants must now fear him? Ha, that's why conditions in the Holy Roman Empire are so splendid!"

Page 52, line 9: "An almanac made from the Holy Bible for many future years."

— *line 12:* "Listen, then, you wretched Empire, the lackey and the laughing stock of the Romans and of all the world!"

Your wise men have given foolish advice at Worms in the Diet before the wretched child Charles, called Roman Emperor, etc. (He is Emperor but his petty magistrates rule.)"

— *line 22:* "Luther, leave us Germans undisturbed, we want to remain the fools of the Romans. They have given us the stolen Empire, so that our bodies, property, honor and lives are now their property. Therefore we have shed so much Christian blood in quarrels. From God we await no reward."

Page 53, line 24: "Even when a few of the best men take an interest in the government and rule all with reason, every one must feel the advantage. As long as Rome, the famous city, believed and acted in this way, all was well. Rome was the ruler of the whole world."

Page 54, line 9: "Still they did not act inconsiderately when they made such a rule that in his oath the king, upon accepting the power, should swear by holy religion, right and justice to allow the entire Empire, the high and low estates, its freedom and to defend it against the caprice of all the parties."

— *line 23:* "So everything sways to and fro like a skiff in the wide sea, which floats about without a master and is the plaything of water and wind."

Page 55, line 20: "What honor then is it for you if you praise the old Germans highly, how they fought for their freedom and tolerated no wicked neighbor, while you do not respect your own freedom? You can hardly be safe in your land, you allow your neighbor to fasten his horse to your fence wherever he pleases."

Page 56, line 10: "Be of good cheer! I know an excellent society which pleases me above all. It is a jolly gathering and concerns itself right little about the Roman Empire. Whether it will perish today or tomorrow is of no importance to them."

— *line 27:* "We are right little concerned about the Roman Empire. Whether it will perish today or tomorrow is of no importance to us. And should it go to pieces—if only the hay is good. With this we will twist a rope which will hold it together."

Page 57, line 14: "Every empire which becomes divided against itself becomes desolate."

— *line 24:* "On the bridge at Magdeburg three little dogs lie. They howl every morning; they admit no Spaniard."

— *line 29:* "On the wall at Magdeburg an iron man lies. If the Emperor wants to win him, his Spaniards will have to undertake the task."

Page 58, line 2: "In the worthy town of Magdeburg there are many rifles. They mourn every morning because the Emperor does not want to come."

— *line 9:* "A bogey is journeying about the Empire—the Emperor is beating the drum with hands and feet, with swords and spears."

— *line 16:* "The Emperor is a tramp. He is riding over the meadow and bringing a sack of money."

Page 59, line 4: "Disunity destroys all empires but can create none."

— *line 11:* "They feared the Emperor's rage. The council was displeased. Hans Katte took it up in scorn: The Emperor is no god."

— *line 21:* "Let him who has ears hear how things go when an empire is destined to fall to pieces. First the head is deprived of his reason and opposes God in everything. His speech dotes on licentiousness and he lives on earth a law unto himself. Hence God says: If I be a mockery to you, you too must come to grief."

CHAPTER IV

Page 62, line 5: "The funereal and cadaverous appearance of our present Germany."

— *line 19:* "The Emperor has practically nothing save that he affixes his empty name and title to all imperial decrees."

— *footnote 8:* "The imperial insignia are objects of great ostentation but they are an empty shadow, to use a phrase of Pliny the Younger, and represent a name devoid of power. Truly, they contain little that suggests empire and power."

Page 63, line 1: "the family that is a bane to our Germany."

— *line 5:* "And as Alexander the Great says, just as physicians leave no infested part in diseased bodies, so we too should anticipate everything that obstructs our Empire, the foundation of which is liberty and not the absolute will of one individual."

— *footnote 11:* "an irregular body resembling a monstrosity."

Page 64, line 13: "Still the kings of Germany retain the term once assumed, albeit they have already for a long time omitted the coronation at Rome and have scarcely made use of any of the rights accruing to them from that ancient summons, since it is customary among rulers to relinquish the fact more quickly than the title."

Page 65, footnote 12: "It is popularly said that law cases at Speyer breathe (*spirare*) but never expire, the reason being that there is such a confusion of procedure and that there are so many cases hanging fire and so few assessors, but above all because the executive power is lacking."

Page 67, line 10: "In the third place, whereas many neighborly quarrels and differences continue to exist within and without the courts between the honorable house of Brandenburg and the common city of Nuremberg, said quarrels and differences, each and every one of them just as they have been handed down to the present day, in their present condition and character, shall without exception and on behalf of our gracious lords, Margrave Albert and Margrave George Frederick, and the city of Nuremberg, be withdrawn from the wearisome judicial proceedings and be discussed and settled in a friendly way."

Page 68, line 16: "O, if only the German Empire, which, timid, inconsolable and weak, is now caught in the meshes of death, would accept your counsel, Mayerne, the only faithful, wise and good counsel, it would not only receive solace, aid and salvation, but its heart, hand, brain, freed from timidity, debility and blind rage, would even attain immortality."

Page 71, line 23: "Why, we are German born. A nation

which has never lost its heart, which has in former days full often been worsted, which has never sought Roman power, from which many an Emperor has had to buy peace and which not one of them has to this day dared to attack, except when perchance it tore its own hair, as in the days of Charles V."

Page 73, line 29: "As one who has the lead in cards and sees another unexpectedly play a trump."

Page 74, line 7: "A new colloquy between St. Peter and Charles the Great in heaven on the present times."

— *line 23:* "A madman who with his own hand deranges his entrails and slaughters his friends as enemies: such a one is Emperor Ferdinand."

Page 75, line 1: "It is of no concern to him in what a way he enervates the Holy Roman Empire."

Page 76, line 3: "Ye honest soldiers, stand firm a little longer; a retreat will bring great disgrace to us and would be of little profit for me, since I am the Emperor's brother."

APPENDIX B

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